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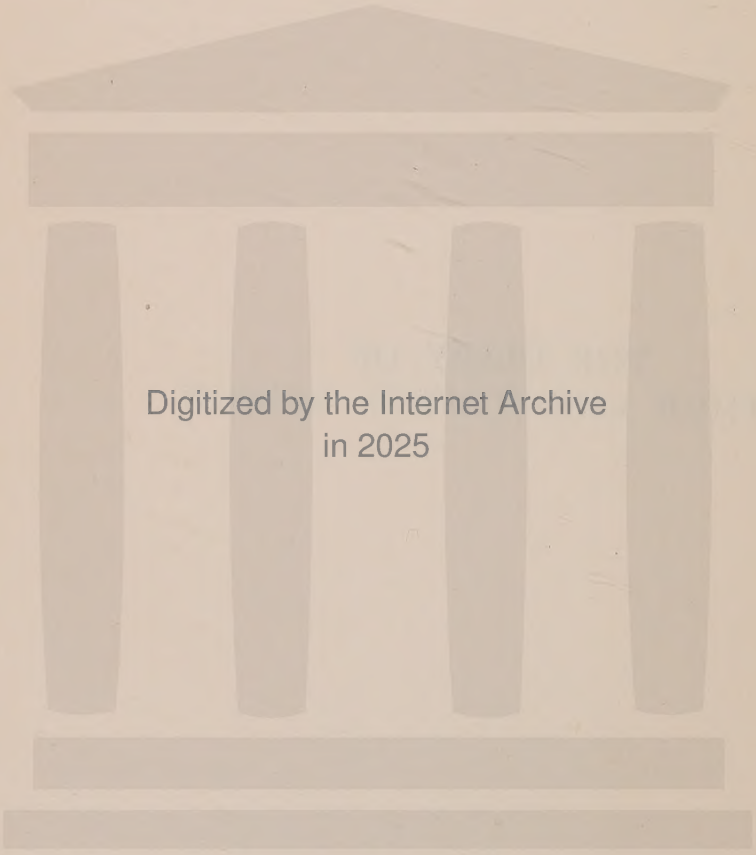
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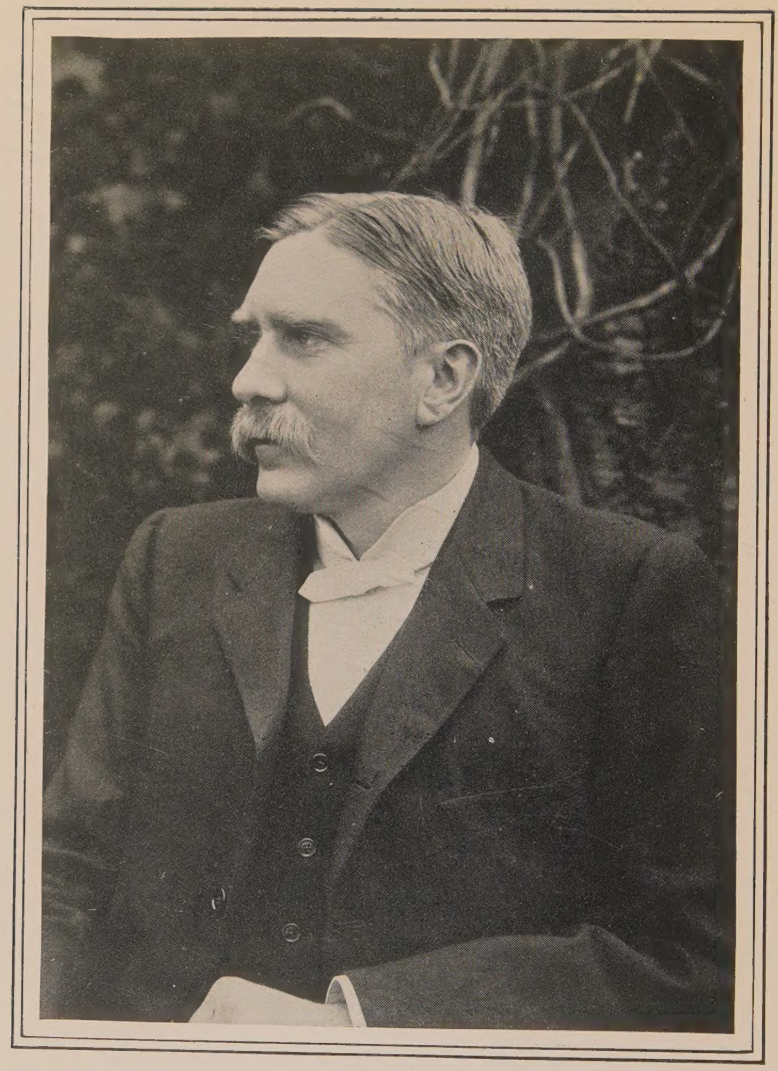

A. C. Benson
1899

A. H. Fry

[*Frontispiece*

THE DIARY
OF
ARTHUR CHRISTOPHER BENSON

EDITED BY
PERCY LUBBOCK

NEW YORK
LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO.
55 FIFTH AVENUE
1926

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THE DIARY OF ARTHUR CHRISTOPHER BENSON

INTRODUCTION

Arthur Benson began to keep a regular diary in 1897, and thenceforward to the end of his life the familiar grey or purple notebook lay always on his table, close to his hand; and at any free moment of his busy day he would seize it, write in it with incredible swiftness, and bring it up to date with a dozen headlong pages. By the end of a month or less the notebook would be filled from cover to cover and a new one opened. Year by year the volumes accumulated; they were stored away as they were finished in a great black wooden box, made for the purpose, in which they were arranged and packed with the ingenious neatness that he loved. The box, as he left it, contains no fewer than a hundred and eighty of these little books, and I calculate roughly that the whole work runs in length to something like four million words —forty substantial volumes, say, if it were printed in full. It means that over and above everything else, all the variety of his professional work, all his literary industry, all his social and active occupations, all the groaning mass of his daily correspondence—over and above the whole of this, in the chinks and crevices of a life that seemed already crammed to overflowing, he found time and space for another big book or two every year. Those who remember the amount and the intensity and the mixture of his activities may well ask in wonder from whence his diary, the mere bulk of it as it

lies in its box, can possibly have sprung; but there it is, tangible and ponderous yield of the spare moments of a man who rarely, scantily, unwillingly, as it seemed, ever had so much as a moment to spare.

After reading it through from beginning to end, from its casual opening on the first day of the Eton summer holidays, nine-and-twenty years ago, to the last lines of all, illegibly scrawled in bed at Magdalene within a few days of his death, one may pause and turn and look back upon the long picture unrolled, trying to seize the whole effect of it and to answer a few of the many questions it provokes. Neither is easy for one who reads this diary with a memory perpetually responding to the old days recorded, the people named, the places described—for one who sees every page through a cloud of associations, who completes every hint and fills every gap with the understanding of long remembrance. How would the enormous record strike a stranger?—it is the first question, and a difficult one for this editor to answer. Is it a piece of self-portraiture, and would it give a stranger a full and fair impression of the man who thus talked to himself, day by day, with such freedom and volubility? Is it to be regarded as a chronicle of scenes and events, the mirror of an academic and a literary life, interesting to a stranger for the vivid and vigorous detail of the panorama? Perhaps it is both; but in both aspects I can believe that the amplifying interpreting memory of an old friend brings much to it that is not actually in the pages; and especially if it is taken as the portrait of Arthur Benson, how he was and how he appeared during all those years, I conclude that there is not a little to be added to it, and perhaps something to be taken away, before it can be offered as the true truth to those who did not know him. He wrote very freely in his diary, and even very recklessly, but in a particular strain, not with all his moods—and not quite unconsciously either, so that the revelation of himself is not always to be accepted without demur. Enough, I place the diary, clearing it as well as I can of the thousand things I read into it, beside the image of the writer as he

lives in a memory that is full of him; and now, as best may be, I note where his own pages fail to give a portrait that satisfies a friend.

I

It has to be remembered always that Arthur Benson talking to himself and Arthur Benson talking to another were two very different people, so different in many ways that the link between them might often be difficult to discern. What do we think of first, if we think of a walk and talk with him, or of a dinner-table where he was present, or of an evening session in his crowded little red-lit study at Magdalene? We think of his geniality, his brimming interest and enjoyment, his rich humour and his irresistible laughter. The hour returns with a sense of liberal ease, in which we all talked and laughed and argued at our best; for he made us all feel better pleased with ourselves, readier and livelier with our jests and anecdotes and ideas than at any other time; and though it was he who controlled the hour and directed it as he liked, there was no air or tone of dictation, we were all equal and companionable together. Nothing went wrong, he never arrived cross or moody or fretful; he brought life into the circle, he freshened it into conviviality. He created enjoyment in the hour, but first he enjoyed it himself—and so obviously, so expansively, that the very sight of him was inspiriting. Those walks or rides in the Cambridgeshire lanes, those evenings of relaxation round the fire, they were always to be counted on; provocative argument, insatiable curiosity, fantastic illustration never failed; and laughter was perpetually in the air, keeping the occasion in a lively stir, in a swing and glow of festivity.

None of us, I suppose, can recall a more delightful talker—or a *causeur*, I would rather say, if the other word sounds too loud and formal. He talked *with* you, he insisted on knowing and hearing and being told—being

told the whole of your story, the last detail of the news you could bring him of your adventures. "I mustn't miss a word of this," he exclaimed with relish as he started you off; and he plied you with his questions, he refused to be satisfied till he was crying out in wonder or dismay or derision at your climax. It might not be much of an adventure really, an excursion, a country visit; but he had to know exactly what had happened, what you had seen, the full amusement and horror of it; for it was usually horror that it provoked, luxuriantly picturesque, to think that you should have dared and done such a feat as to stay, for example, in a strange house with a party of people for a day and a night. Think what his own sufferings would have been in such a predicament! He described them with gust and minuteness—how the gay company would have paralysed him, how he would have sat heavily staring and despairing, unable to speak or think, his bones dissolving, his nose as sharp as a pen. And so it went on, the dismal picture was elaborated; and you might venture to put another picture beside it, the manner of his real appearance in a sociable gathering, centre and leader of whatever vivacity and charm it might possess; but he would have none of it, he denied and protested, using the best of his wit, his ingenuity, his extravagance of drollery, to describe his unfitness for society in general.

It meant, of course, that he preferred to meet people upon his own terms, not upon theirs; he liked the interesting occasions better than the boring; but this simple explanation he could not admit. And certainly it was not trouble that he spared himself in company—in any company. He courted the acquaintance, it is the right phrase, of anyone who fell in his way—the great man whom he sat by at dinner, or the shy youth whom he invited to lunch, or the servant who attended to his needs; he took equal pains with them all, he brought his best to bear upon all alike to establish free and friendly communication. I have often watched him labouring in this manner at thankless tasks, devoting his pleasant

attention to mere dullness and platitude, refusing to be defeated. Nothing discouraged him but positive incivility—pretentious manners, rude answers, overbearing discourse; and then indeed he submitted with the worst grace possible, he fumed in an uneasy silence of which his friends could immediately recognise the signals—and not always in silence either, if the right opening came for the trenchant word which he could plant, no one better, in the place where it was deserved. He hated to be silenced, he more fiercely hated to be bored than anyone we have known; but by well-meaning affability he was never bored, and it took a very intemperate and tyrannical talker to silence him. On the whole we see him intent upon his colloquy, rather shamelessly holding his neighbour away from the general talk, delighting him with low-voiced entertainment to which we all wish to listen when the general talk wears thin; or if he must attend to his duty, if he is the presiding host, then the right light vein that fits the occasion, in which all can share and shine, is never to seek and never fails. Most genial of hosts and most sociable of companions—so he seemed and so he was, for the hour.

II

But it was not for him an hour of rest. It was always hard to believe, yet it was true, that he was much at the mercy of his politeness, constrained to make himself agreeable by a sort of doom of courtesy which he could not escape. It was hard to believe him when he said so, for how could such liberal ways be simulated by a sense of duty?—he must have enjoyed himself as he seemed to enjoy. And indeed he did, he had many faculties for enjoyment in his mind—minute and inquisitive observation, a lively taste, not for the humours only, but for the very dust and draff of homely gossip. The low conversation in the corner, so absorbing as it seemed, might easily prove to be an earnest exchange of the precise

details of—what shall we say?—the ownership of all the villas on the Huntingdon Road, all the sources of the income of a provincial grammar-school, the family history of an archdeacon; he acquired and retained with satisfaction a vast mass of information upon topics as brightening as these. But true it was, nevertheless, that his politeness laid hold of him in company and gave him no rest; he could never take his ease and wait on events and allow himself to be approached and solicited; he was bound to do all the work. And naturally it was fatiguing, and when the hour was over he subsided with relief upon his solitude—not to rest, for he could not rest, but to work as he pleased, without the need of pleasing. Why not take the obligation more lightly, as he was well entitled to take it? He could not say why, he only knew that when he met people he had to win their favour, to conciliate and attach them as fast as he might. The shadow of critical displeasure must be repelled at all cost.

So he said, so he asserted with some of the exaggeration that amused him. But there was this much of truth in it, that his sensibility to his surroundings, the present company, the scene, the moment, was like a nerve continually exposed. He was never unconscious of the moment or of anything it brought; and if it brought what to another might be the mildest and most transient of discomfort, his nerve outrageously felt it. He had to take care of the minutes as they passed; for he was stung, he was positively murdered by the trifle of boredom in which other people acquiesced indifferently. There was no fraction of the day in which he could relapse, like other people, into careless unperceptive ease. The room of which he had to learn every detail, the face of which every lineament must be traced, the landscape full of trees and roads and houses to be noted and accounted for, they all kept him at a strain of occupation; and his only relief was in a shift from one task to another, a change of activity that was punctual, and no wonder, from hour to hour. This fierce exposure to the day long assault of impressions explained a great deal in the

routine of his life, which so often appeared to be at once too rigid and too feverish, too tightly bound in habits that might not be broken, too perilously crammed with engagements, bits of business of all kinds, beyond anything that could in reason be required of him. He used to envy the friend whom he saw sitting indolent and placid, staring out of window, wasting time. He could never refresh himself in that way; and least of all could he allow his effort to relax, his mind to wander idly, when the passing minutes were shared by a companion. Then he was doubly employed; he had to save the occasion twice over, for himself and for that other; and the other must be dull or perverse indeed if the double success was not achieved.

It was usually achieved on the spot, and a casual acquaintance had become a friendship on a comfortable footing. So it appeared to both of them, and with justice; and in the kindly words and sentiments with which they parted there was only one possibility of misconception, and that perhaps by both of them easily overlooked. And after all it was not very serious. If the new friend felt that he had been admitted into deeper intimacy than was really the fact, at any rate he had had his agreeable hour, he was not to be pitied; and if Arthur Benson was occasionally distraught to find that more was expected where he had given so much, he too might console and defend himself without much difficulty. He learned, I judge, by experience that his pleasant power of making people swiftly his friends could bring its own embarrassment now and then—bring claims upon his time, attention, sympathy, for which he was not prepared; but when all was said and he had made his complaint, it was no great price to pay for an enviable talent. Of all his gifts as a schoolmaster among boys, as a don among undergraduates, it was probably the first and best; and I dare say it was not less valuable when he was a schoolmaster among his colleagues and a don among dons. In these capacities he will presently be seen at closer quarters; but meanwhile let a glimpse be taken of him in any congenial circle, at any time—and there he

is, all gaiety and volubility and good-humour, cordially disposed, comfortable in the world. We have the look of him by heart—sitting low in his chair, ruddy and bulky and rough-haired, twitching his cigarette with restless fingers, throwing back his head with his enjoyable infectious laugh; and this is a sight to be recalled again and again and lingered over, now that he is gone, and now that we are faced by a portrait of him, in his diary, wherein his true likeness is at many a point missed entirely. Introspective as he was often believed to be, absorbed in contemplation of his own peculiarities, in fact he never knew himself well enough to record himself aright. Here is one thing, the geniality of his presence, which he failed to see as others always saw it.

III

On the other hand he was quite aware how jealously he guarded his independence. "Don't make your house in my mind"—that was a phrase he used to quote from Aristophanes, and one could see how instinctively he put out his hands and warded off the danger of encroachment. Nobody must invade his mind, force his inclination, "hustle" him—it was a frequent word of his, he ruffled and bristled at the suggestion. He clutched his liberty; he never surrendered a jot of it—and not only that, but if ever on any pretext it was threatened, in love or strife, he lost all scruple in protecting himself, he thought of nothing but to rout and disable the intruder. Why should people desire to press in upon him, when he was always so ready to meet them in the doorway and talk agreeably on the threshold? It was not as though he was stiff with them out there, or distant in his greeting; far from it indeed—he talked with the utmost freedom, he would frankly answer any question they liked to ask. Less than anybody was he disposed to make a secret of his privacy; it was for all who cared to hear him tell about it. But that must suffice—

and why should it not? He thought it might suffice, as in the lives of others it was all he dreamed of demanding for himself. Anyhow he could not admit the kind of interference which asks for more than can be told upon the threshold; and if more was insisted on, if a place and a lodging was required in the seclusion of his mind—then there was likely to be trouble.

In all this perhaps he did not differ by much from other men—or differed chiefly on a single point, an important one, of which more must be said in a moment. He was like enough to other men, at all events, for many old and sound and imperturbable friendships to centre in him. The friends of his youth were his friends till he died, or they—for several of the nearest, among them the closest of all, died before him. These had been with him since his schooldays; some were of his own generation, not a few of an older, and his tie with them all was of a kind that changes and chances do not touch. It is there to prove that when he talks, as he does, about the coldness of his heart and the slackness of his affections, the words are not to be taken as seriously as they sound. He went his own way through life and did his own work, and when his path fell in with that of his old friends he welcomed the meeting and made the most of it, and when it happened again nothing had been lost in absence and more was added; and if this is a poor account of friendship it may be asked whether most men have a better to produce—or whether they need wish for a better. As for his chilly and unfeeling disposition, I may call it famous among his friends, so much they heard of it; but this could hardly be the right explanation of their reproach, always one and the same —which amounted to the complaint that they could never see enough of him. The man he thought himself is not the man who is sought as eagerly and lost as regretfully as Arthur Benson.

These were the friends who understood him and whom he understood—a notable company, going and coming in the pages of this book. They knew him too

well to be affected by that idiosyncrasy to which I have alluded—not his care for his independence and not his love of his own way and work, but something more unusual and in the house of friendship more hazardous. It was his prompt command of words and his perennial inclination to use them—it was that. Nobody ever perplexed his relations in the world more inveterately by too much talk about them, too much explanation and justification, above all by too much brilliant and incisive correspondence. He could not leave a disturbed situation alone, to straighten itself out in a little peace and silence; and at any rate in his later years it took a small thing to start a disturbance. It was begun, perhaps, by somebody's luckless desire to beset him too closely, to engage him with over-urgent calls upon his intimacy; or it was begun, on the contrary, by somebody's graceless and wilful neglect of his just demands: anyhow he struck out at once, his phrases flew; and in a trice the little embarrassment was defined and hardened, and there was an alliance, new or old, that had somehow gone askew, and he could not tell why. "I have written him" (or more often "her," perhaps) "a long and careful letter": when he said this it was always ominous; and though the ensuing flurry of replies and counter-replies, qualifying and clarifying and eternally justifying, might be exhilarating for a time, he forgot too easily that his pen was very sharp. Well, it all arose from a genuine wish to avoid ambiguity, and it ended in his protest, yet again, that he was incapable of a fine and warm and generous devotion. He could only envy those who were more bountifully endowed.

I think once more that with all his self-scrutiny he was wrong. Not coldness it was, but an old strict use of precaution, a rule of safety, which he recognised with dislike, though with the best of wills he could never infringe it. He responded very quickly in fondness and warmth so long as the rule was observed and his own terms were inviolate. And then there was something else, his masterfulness, that told for more than he was

aware of in his dealings with his neighbours. Did he indeed suppose himself to be a gentle shrinking apologetic soul, readily daunted, inapt for controversy? Not quite, no doubt, though he loved to persuade you that he did; but of the true fact he seemed to be really unaware, that he controlled and commanded like an autocrat. His later and younger friends, to whom his kindness and his sympathy were beyond estimation, had nevertheless to learn that his authority was easily affronted. He did not, in point of fact, consider the independence of others as carefully as he defended his own; and the day of collision, if it came, found him combative, unsparing, not in the least inclined to placable forbearance. He laid about him lustily, he discharged his indignation with memorable effect. He gave, first and last, a good deal of pain, by no means without intention at the moment; but after all the intention was loose and light in his mind when the shaft had flown, and it surprised him to learn that the barb had stuck where it hit. He certainly did like power, and he used it without shame—and yet ingenuously, too, deceiving nobody but himself, and with a sense of the fun of it all that was young and exuberant to the end. The stirring adventure of discovering and using one's force—he plunged into it again and again, gay and fresh as a beginner.

IV

The shadow of a strange and difficult illness fell on him several times in his life, changing everything while it lasted, and more than once it lasted for years. The green world that he loved was turned to dust, and he suffered in bewilderment and misery. This we know; but we remember too, and it should be clearly noted, that when the shadow lifted it passed completely; not a trace of it was left to trouble the good times. He enjoyed the pleasure of the day again exactly as before, or only with the heightened excitement of release; he came

out undamaged, undimmed, and even—what was odder, though agreeable, too—uninstructed, having learnt nothing and forgotten nothing in distress. These terrors were deep and dire; they were far the most searching experience of his life, and he was hardly grown a man when he knew them first; yet they counted as nothing at all when they were gone. And this, which could only be matter for thankfulness, is an illustration of his singular power to evade the penalties of time—and doubtless more than its penalties, some of its rewards as well. So long as he was happy in mind it seemed that time had no effect on him; and I am not referring to his physical robustness, remarkable as that was too. His life in his work, in his many and varied occupations, was broader and fuller and busier year by year; but his life within was a life that never grew old, never was shaped or stiffened by maturity, never came of age.

The youthfulness of the temper of his mind was doubly revealed—in the freshness of his curiosity and his perception, in the lightness and slightness of his wayward judgment. What were his opinions? He had them in plenty, they sprang up at a touch, on all sides, lively and vigorous, alert to the least word of challenge. But what were his settled opinions, his convictions, the faith that he held in solitude?—for that other proliferation had a fortuitous air, it was the flowering of the moment. As for his principles, his general ideas, though he certainly had no will to conceal them, there was a difficulty in discovering what remained when the rich tangle of contention and contradiction was cleared away. Not very much remained, perhaps; for the truth was that his mind escaped as undisciplined, as unschooled, as the breeze that blows in the wildwood. He always loved freedom and he always hated tyranny; was that not enough consistency for a working faith? It was all that was left him, at any rate; and perhaps the rule he attacked was not the most unreasonable, perhaps the freedom he ensued was not very closely defined; but one thing was sure—that his argument, supple and easy and abundant,

was much more amusing than any of his opponent's. When it came to words the rest of us were nowhere; for while we were painfully seeking and measuring our phrases, his own were cracking about our ears with an advantage that he was prompt to use. Exasperating in dispute he often was, so ready, so elusive, so unfair; but he was never dull.

He gave himself away with both hands, cheerful and careless. He fell upon the time-honoured riddles of life and death, art and philosophy, faith and morals, as irresponsibly as though no one had given them a thought before him; new every morning, fresh for debate, was the perplexity of the freedom of the will, the meaning of evil, the way of all flesh. How can a man, with these fascinating mysteries ever before him, exhaust his wonder and leave speculation to the pundits? He could not, for one; to him they remained as enticing as ever they have seemed to curious candid youth. And as with the daring of youth he delivered his thought on these high matters, so with unaging quickness of eye and humour he watched the world about him, near at hand—a world of a well-marked horizon, not large, but it was more than enough to gratify his appetite for amusing detail. He was pleased with everything he saw; he did not ask for wonders and rarities, he preferred the shelter of the life he had made for himself, and the sober landscape of his choice; but nothing escaped him within it, and from the romance of its beauty to the jest of its absurdity he loved it all. And not only on the delights, he thrived too on the impatient irritations and vexations of the day; they did their part to sharpen the zest with which, in the good unshadowed times, he devoured the hour. No doubt he lived and thought and worked too fast—too fast for safety, as it certainly was for the best of care and finish. But if he paid heavily for the years of enjoyment, at least he enjoyed them. The spirit of his vitality was none the maturer for age or pain, but it was unquenched by either.

V

With all this, with his happiness and his prosperity, with his pleasure in his gifts, in his work, in his congenial lot, there was something amiss with his ease, some disharmony even in the good times; he was never, it seemed, entirely and securely at home with himself. It was not that his crowded days so flagrantly belied the gospel of meditative tranquillity which he loved to preach; that was a contradiction too open and notorious to be troublesome. But there was a deeper misgiving, a more insidious; and I would not say that in health and strength it vexed him much, but it had its effect—I come round to it now—its unmistakable effect on the tone of his talk to himself, his soliloquy in his diary. He had never made sure, never been forced to make sure, of the ground he stood on; he had never discovered himself, worked out his own salvation. And so his solitude, guarded as it was from the intrusion of man or woman, wanted the last and inmost confidence; and more and more, as the years went on, this failure of assurance, beneath so much that was vigorously assured, made itself felt. He well knew what he had missed, he lamented it; but he also knew, or he thought he knew, that the ways by which most men attain their sufficiency were closed to him. They were closed by those old habits of prudence which he deplored; but then those habits again, it was useless to say they should be broken. If he had been the man to break them he would not have been the man to form them; and he left the melancholy truth at that, with a sigh—not a very deep or doleful sigh, when all is said.

But it is to this malease, haunting his seclusion, that I trace a strain of inhospitality, disrelish, perversity—whatever it is to be called—which often appears in his expatiation to himself, and which might suggest as often that he was ungracious to a world where he moved in fact so happily, so genially. The whole day was stirring and stimulating, it all passed in a round of absorbing

tasks and mirthful meetings; and then, when he was alone with his note-book—not always, far from it, but not seldom either—the warmth went out of his thought, some chill of discontent, of disparagement passed into it; and the day was portrayed in a light too sharp and unkind for the pleasant fact. It is a kind of amends that he makes to himself for the diligence of his friendliness in society; and it means that he cannot sufficiently rest upon himself, upon his own belief in himself, for liberal and composed reflection. The warning is needless, very likely, in respect of the pages that follow, so small a fraction as they must be of the whole vast number in the diary; but still it is as well to put it plainly—Arthur Benson was the last man in the world of whom it could be said that he lived with a grievance. He lived, on the contrary, with a warm and conscious satisfaction in the many good things of his life, and he had an exceptional power of imparting his pleasure to his companions. He utterly misrepresents himself if he persuades his reader to think otherwise.

For indeed his addiction to musing and ruminating on paper, pensively regarding himself, gazing into the mirror of his temperament—this was something that seemed to be dropped into a character where it did not in the least belong. He was a masterful practical man, of strong preferences and determined will; he was a man of swift imagination and temper, acutely sensitive to passing impressions, quick to perceive and to forget; an impatient lover of beauty, an inspiriting companion, an imperious friend. He was an artist of many talents, blessed or afflicted with a facility which he had not the weight to stem; he worked voraciously, with the lightness of hand of a craftsman, but with no tenacity, no faithful desire for perfection. He was a memorable master of youth—master rather than teacher or trainer; an inspirer of loyalty, an awakener of admiration and devotion, firing enthusiasm rather than guiding or fortifying it. Such he was, so he remains with us; and with this memory the picture he made of himself, in colours so far less intense and decided, will never rightly accord.

That discrepancy points to a deeper and obscurer within him, a rift in a nature never in all its parts adjusted with itself. But if that disquietude was always there it was easily borne, easily forgotten in the engrossing business of the day; and it gave no uncertainty to the mark he left upon all who knew him and who miss him now.

PERCY LUBBOCK

I

1897—1899

In the summer holidays of 1897, during a visit to a familiar and well-loved house in North Wales, Arthur Benson began to scribble in a note-book an account of his days. "Waited for an hour at the station at Portmadoc; hung on the bridge for half the time; two little Welsh boys talking funnily": such was the casual opening of a narrative that was to last unbroken, or very nearly so, for twenty-eight years. There was a reason for its beginning just then. That summer there had been privately printed a volume which had a deep effect on him, the *Letters and Journals* of William Johnson (afterwards Cory), author of *Ionica*; and this book, with its poetic evocation of the life of another Eton master, had inspired him to keep a regular diary of his own, for the first time. He began, and the habit soon had hold of him. He carried the note-book with him to Eton, when he returned there after the holidays, and in the pressure of work he still contrived to maintain a fairly connected chronicle—slight and unmethodical at first, but gradually it settled down to a steady and copious stream of the detail of the day.

That August in North Wales—he was now aged thirty-five, and had been a master at Eton for twelve years—is thus by chance a crucial date in his biography. Nothing thereafter happened to him from without, of any importance whatever, which is not recorded in the diary; day by day, from this time

onward, he may be watched and followed in all his movements and occupations. The sudden flood of revelation, breaking in upon his journey, finds him at the height of his life and work at Eton—fortunate in his powers, successful in their exercise, with a notable place and repute among his boys, among his colleagues, among Etonians generally. He was a schoolmaster singled out for independence, for originality, for a peculiar portion of tact and understanding in the management of the young. He had held a house for the last five years, and had made it one of the best and most popular in the school. He was regarded as a likely headmaster in the future. He was also a recognised man of letters, with several volumes of verse and prose to his name. Moreover he was now, after an earlier time of nervous stress and strain, in vigorous health and spirits, equal to his work, bearing its responsibilities with practised ease. In short, it was a good moment, full of satisfaction and interest, the future opening before it with abundant promise. It is true that he was rather unsettled in his mind, not entirely contented in his calling; his ambitions were divided; they pulled him steadily towards literature, doubtfully in the line of his profession. But this conflict was hardly acute as yet, and six of his most fruitful and strenuous years as a schoolmaster were still to come. And now, before the diary is opened, a rapid account may be given of his course to this point, the point where it becomes at a stroke so plain to see and follow.

Arthur Christopher Benson was born on April 24, 1862, at Wellington College, in Berkshire. He was the second son of Edward White Benson, then headmaster of Wellington, and his wife (who was also his cousin) Mary Sidgwick. Arthur's elder brother, Martin, died as a schoolboy at Winchester in 1877. His younger brothers were Edward Frederick and Robert Hugh, his sisters were Mary Eleanor and Margaret—names that here need no more than to be

mentioned, for each has its own distinction in this remarkable family. Their father became Chancellor of Lincoln in 1872, Bishop of Truro in 1877, and Archbishop of Canterbury in 1883. Arthur went first to school at Temple Grove, East Sheen, and then in 1874 as a colleger to Eton. In 1881 he went on to Cambridge, with a scholarship at King's. He was in the first class of the Classical Tripos in 1884. In the same year he was offered and accepted a mastership at Eton. And again, perhaps, it is needless to do more than to give these facts and dates in order, since the story of his early days has been told in fullness by Arthur himself, and also, from another angle of vision, by his surviving brother. The triple memory of Wellington, Lincoln, Truro, the work their father accomplished in these places and the part they played in the children's lives, is intimately shared by all the readers of the children's books. I need not attempt to tell the story again, but only to recall how deeply Arthur was still influenced in later life by certain of the traditions of his childhood.

He was born in a school, the son of a schoolmaster; the whole of his career was divided between Eton and Cambridge, and he died the master of his adopted college. But for all that he was never really scholastic, and still less academic. Neither school nor university set its stamp on him; he evaded their influence, he was always at heart a sojourner in both, sitting loosely; at any moment he could leave them and feel no urgent call to return. There was a much stronger appeal for him elsewhere; it was in the precinct of a cathedral that he knew himself to be truly at home. Not Wellington and not schoolmastering, but Lincoln, the hierarchy of the close, the realm of the dean and chapter, planted in him the deepest and most enduring associations. These also, no doubt, he carried lightly, for they, no more than any others, could constrain him; but it was these that he instinctively understood, that he possessed as his own, after a manner in which he never possessed or understood

the tradition of school or college. He always said that he knew the language of the minster-world as he knew no other; and though he was not often to be seen in it, the threads of his communication with the background of his youth were many and unbroken to the end. He was the least ecclesiastically minded of men, with all his thought revolting briskly against the forms and sanctions of authority; nor was he tender in piety towards the dignified influences of his past. But none the less they clung to him, and to the last of his days he was nowhere quite so much at his ease, quite so certain of his familiar understanding, as with the Church.

As for his boyhood, the suggestion of all his surroundings at that time was irresistible; he had no doubt that he would take orders, devote himself to a cure in a country parish, and peaceably proceed to some pleasant canonry or deanery in the distance. That was the natural prospect, and it had not been abandoned, I gather, when the offer of work at Eton, just after he had taken his Cambridge degree, made up his mind for him otherwise. He always spoke as though he had only drifted into his profession along the line of least resistance; and this may not have been all the truth, but it is clear that at that time, in his twenty-third year, he was in a state of great agitation and irresolution, with more than the normal pains of youth and growth. A crisis of emotion and religion, no matter exactly how they were mixed, had plunged him into dark depression—so dark and deep that after many years he still looked back on his days as an undergraduate with dismay. Out of that ferment of trouble came his first book, a fictitious *Memoir of Arthur Hamilton*, which attracted some attention, much to his annoyance ever after, by a certain vividness in it of uneasy immaturity. And so at the beginning of 1885, straight from Cambridge and these distresses, he took his place, and started his work at Eton.

It was a misfortune that he was called back to school so soon, with no interval left him in which to wander

and collect his mind and broaden his experience. His life was entirely shaped for him, he had no opportunity to venture for himself; he got no freedom until the lines on which he could use it were fixed beyond changing. This he never ceased to regret, with good reason; he had been too promptly tied to a part and a position of his own. And yet in a way it mattered less to him than to another; for he was not a man whom any part or position could unduly impound—and this was the healthy side of what was also his unrest, his inconstancy. To have missed his chance to roam would never make him acquiescent, conventionally stiffened in the ways of his calling. Anyhow he set to work in good heart, apprehending no difficulties and apparently finding none. He controlled his fourth-form division and his rapidly filled pupil-room—I have to assume that I need not explain the "Eton system" of his day, as indeed it is said that it is only known to Etonians and not by them to be explained —he was easily successful, then, from the first, both as a division-master and as a classical tutor. Too easily indeed—as perhaps it may have seemed to the most severe; and certainly there was no anxious theory in his method at any time, nor any painfully studied practice. But with friendliness and humour, with ready speech and courteous decision, with a gift for making his wrath uncomfortable and his favour gratifying—with all this beside his discernment, his insight into the working of the mind and spirit of a boy—he had more than enough to carry him prosperously over his first years as a schoolmaster. He was appointed to a boarding-house in 1892; but of his house and what he was for it, what he did for it, there will be more to say.

Meanwhile he lodged with his colleague and friend Edward Lyttelton in the house called Baldwin's Shore, by Barnes Pool—there first, and then by himself in rooms over Williams's bookshop, opposite the west end of chapel. Of his other friends in the place, Herbert Tatham was then and afterwards (till he died

in 1909) always the nearest—his is a name and a memory to be set beside Arthur Benson's in any account of those years; and there were many more who will presently be met in the diary, older and younger colleagues, his constant companions in mutual hospitality through the half and the holidays. The life of Eton absorbed him more and more; but it always left room—or by careful economy of time it was made to leave room—for plentiful literary work, mostly verse for some years to come; and on that side of his interests he soon touched the world of letters outside Eton, mainly by the offices of a friend, Edmund Gosse, with whom his alliance was thenceforward lifelong. And then there was always Lambeth, or more generally Addington, for a home in the holidays, though neither of these places ever attached him like the provinces of his youth. On the whole it was with Eton and his friends of Eton that the years were filled; but it is not to be forgotten that Eton is the centre of a very large radiation, and that the circle of an Eton tutor takes a broad sweep through English life. The master of a pupil-room, and soon of a house, so popular as Arthur Benson's had friends everywhere, a range of acquaintance and affiliation which spread far and wide as time went on.

His first boarding-house was one of the two, the low white one, which then stood on the site of the present School Hall; from whence he soon moved to that which is now called Gulliver's, after its ancient dame of the last century; and thence again in 1895 to a house by the back-entrance of Brewer's Yard—a double house, its two halves joined by a passage-way over the gate of the yard. The lesser half, the "cottage," still survives, and the archway too; but the main building, with its comfortable old bow-windows, and the huge wistaria-trunk that hung across the low front-door, perished by conflagration many years ago, and a new house, Baldwin's End, stands in its place. In these migrations, I may be allowed to say in passing, this present editor was one of the flock that

accompanied him; and it was in the twin building by Brewer's Yard, looking out from that secluded corner over garden and field to Windsor Castle, that we attained our due rank in the school as a full-sized house, with a position of our own and a growing record of success. An Eton house is a compact polity, a city-state within the large vague boundary of the school; and we inside our walls lived a life that was informed and ordered, more than we knew, by its presiding genius. His rule was very liberal; he had a summary way with details and trivialities, he brushed them aside and talked to us like a friendly host; there was nothing narrow or parochial in the easy circle of his influence. But he was paramount, he was absolute in his rule, and our freedom was never laxity; nor was it entrusted to our own guiding and disposing as much as perhaps we thought. To give a young disciple the sense of greater responsibility than he is really allowed—that is surely the stroke of a clever-handed master. It was Arthur Benson's, without doubt. He acted swiftly in discipline, never tediously or provocatively; and we seemed to live in the free air of the world, like rational beings.

And so we reach the year 1897, "diamond jubilee year," and a midsummer half much occupied with rehearsals in the playing-fields for our torchlight parade before the Queen at the Castle—evolutions, intricate pattern-weavings, shot through in memory by the great boom of the voice of the Head, our tremendous Warre. These preparations, and the Queen's visit to Eton, and then the flaring and songful parade itself, successfully achieved on its night, brought history into that half for all of us—and in a special fashion, as it chanced, for Arthur Benson. He wrote the words of one of our songs, a lyrical tribute to Herself; and this may count as the modest beginning of an affair touching royalty that was to grow to importance for him later on. There was soon a time when he appeared an unofficial laureate of the Court, so punctually he was in demand for poems, hymns, canticles

on various occasions of interest to Queen Victoria; and so it went on till, after she was gone, a weightier behest from the Castle brought his long-desired release from school. For already in 1897 the routine of his work so oppressed him at times that he began to reckon his resources, exploring possibilities of escape; but these were as yet too doubtful and hazardous for a decided step. However, it mattered the less because he had now at last shaken off, it seemed, that trouble of his nerves which had distressed him periodically since his Cambridge days—and very badly in particular (we little guessed it at the time) during his first years as a housemaster. He rejoiced in the relief; though the other burden, the school-work, more and more vexed him as needlessly heavy, wasteful of strength and effort. It was the "system"; his vigorous indictment of it, heart-felt, loudly ingeminated in later days, had begun.

And then, to complete the account of his situation at this moment, a loss had recently fallen upon him, affecting him very deeply, bringing great changes in the background of his life. His father, Archbishop of Canterbury since 1883, had died very suddenly the year before—sunk down and died while he knelt on a Sunday morning in Hawarden Church. The influence of that remarkable man upon his son has been described by the son—an influence that partly defeated itself, it would seem, in early days, so exactingly, so purposefully it was exerted; but still it was the greatest of facts in the lives of all the children, and on Arthur perhaps it had never been stronger than it had grown to be of late, in increasing intimacy with his father. Nor was it lessened now, it was enhanced rather; for in writing the life of the Archbishop (it was his chief literary task for the next two years) his fuller discovery of him, his deepened sense of his father's singular genius, abidingly impressed his imagination. They were very unlike each other, the father with his high moral fervour and the son with his versatile impatience; it was in the eager, the far more flexible and penetrat-

ing sympathy of his mother that Arthur found the truest understanding, then and ever. But the thought of his father was constantly with him as he grew older—how constantly, how intensely is shown by a frequent note in the diary: "Dreamt with extraordinary vividness of E.W.B."

And now to open the first of the hundred-and-eighty little volumes—with a few glimpses of him in his work at Eton, on various days of the Michaelmas half, 1897.

"A new division, sitting like mice, all demure; they seem amiable and serious. I wonder what W.J. would have said at the decorum, the discipline, the friendliness that now prevail. I hardly ever raise my voice above a conversational tone, and very rarely set a punishment. But it's a precarious trade, and depends much on calm nerves."

"Last Sunday I lectured on Philemon with great care —I thought successfully. I read Pliny's letter on a similar subject. By Wednesday evening Eddy Cadogan had forgotten that I had said anything, and did not know who Philemon was: 'I get so mixed about the Epistles, sir'—had never heard (he said) of Onesimus. A good lesson to *me*, at all events."

"Warre consulted me whether he should set books for private reading, to be marked in Trials. I criticised details. But this won't give a love of reading—the bribing and paying is bad. Athletics are the only *serious* thing; literature is thought an amiable foible. I have a *few* boys who respect knowledge. But the only time when real gravity and momentousness comes into a boy's face is when *you* talk of serious faults, or when *they* talk of athletics."

"I am very busy: rather happy: God knows I am not complacent . . . I am nobody in this busy place except a pleasant, sociable person, rather reclusive, but amiable when extracted. I have no influence or weight. My business capacities are mistrusted, my accuracy doubted, my originative powers discredited, my 'auctoritas'

non-existent. I do not mind this, but it keeps me humble, I hope."

"I have my hands too full, but on the whole I get more happiness from over-fulness. The result of it is a kind of despair and irritability, while the result of leisure and insufficient work is with me inevitable depression.

"To-day I sit for an hour and a half rewriting a copy of Latin Alcaics by C. on 'Strikes.' They are quite worthless. C. has no sort of scholarship or literary taste; he is to give up classics for history the moment he leaves. The work racks my brain—it is the hardest work I have to do—and it is poor enough when done, because the subject is impossible. Meanwhile to do this I scamp my history paper, cannot give a word of help to my fourth-form boys in pupil-room. And C. does not know what it means, and Warre probably does not look it over; but this form of work is what is called the Eton system—to crush the master under mechanical and useless work, give him no scope for stimulating work with his pupils, knock him up with exhaustion, and for two or three boys who don't read what is written and don't know whether it is good or bad. This will be *incredible* fifty years hence.

"My division still very demure and seemingly awed. I dare say I shall find out my mistake. They do not see my jests, but look gravely at me and make a note."

These are characteristic moments and moods, lightly noted as they passed and not to be lingered over now. A fuller and more continuous picture of his life at Eton it will unfortunately not be possible to find in his diary for some time to come—and this for more than one reason. The work of the week, with Latin Alcaics and lectures on Philemon and the like scattered thickly over the ever-present cares and claims of his house—all this was too close to him and too insistent to be sketched at large in his note-book. And he was rather slow in acquiring a confident and easy tone for his diary's reflections on the day; I notice,

for instance, what he says about his unconsidered state at Eton, and I know that he well knew that he was far from being "nobody in this place." He is not yet entirely alone with himself as he writes. "In this long gap," he mentions one day, "the book has been paying calls—to Lady Ponsonby and others": very pleasant for them all, no doubt, but a frank free journal needs to live more secluded, and this one was at first too apt to take the air. "That story, mind," Lady Ponsonby herself remarks later on, after a conversation, "is *not* for your too accessible diary!" And the diary, till at length it retired into greater privacy, suffered more than the loss of the anecdote in question. The touch of constraint is very light, but it is felt.

The same good friend reproached him, it appears, for always spending his holidays in the company of his colleagues; and it is true that his holidays by this time had a pattern from which they seldom varied. Once he used to go abroad—with small enthusiasm, and not often at that; three or four times to Italy and Spain, and then occasionally to Switzerland, with a short-lived inclination towards Alpine climbing. It was strange to see how completely incurious about foreign parts he remained thereafter; in thirty years he never crossed the sea but once, and then only on doctor's orders. All his interests were limited by the British coast, lively as they were within it; foreign ways disagreed with him, foreign tongues baffled him—he preferred to stay at home. And at home he could rarely be tempted to venture into strange houses; so that a Christmas holiday in which he actually visited two—Malwood and Claremont, no less—must be recalled as against his friend's rebuke. With Sir William Harcourt and his family he had older associations; but when, in this December of 1897, he stayed with the Duchess of Albany at Claremont, he made the beginning of a firm friendship of many years, and presently her young son was a lower-boy in his house. In the same holidays, moreover, he is found at

Farnham Castle, with Bishop Davidson of Winchester; but there he was in a circle where he was all but son and brother, so many and so close were the ties between his own family and that of his father's former chaplain—soon to become Archbishop of Canterbury in his turn.

In general, however, his vacations were very like each other. There were in those days two familiar houses on which a great deal of Eton converged in holiday-time, homes of lavish hospitality to many, to Arthur Benson among the first; and both these houses, with the friends and colleagues who presided in them, had a larger place in his life than a few words can describe. To Dunskey, in Scotland, and to Tan-yr-allt, in North Wales, he returned again and again; with Stuart Donaldson and his family at Dunskey, with Arthur Ainger (and often with Howard Sturgis, a joint-host) at Tan, he was among some of his most constant companions at Eton. And if he was not staying with them in one place or the other, he was likely to be established with Herbert Tatham in some provincial inn, exploring the countryside with a thorough-going zeal that was never to be exhausted. Or else he was at Winchester, where his mother had now settled for a time; and so the holidays slipped away, and he was back at school again, rather unwillingly, with a spirit that sank at the thought of the drudgery of the crowded weeks, though rising to vanquish it very soon.

It is now the summer of 1898; and I recall his easy and agreeable control of the talk "at dinner and other times," how he freshened it out of the staleness of our common routine, as I read the first of the notes that follow.

"I think the big boys in the house full of tact. They labour to talk to me on general subjects at dinner and other times, and not only don't expect me to talk athletics, but if the talk veers round thither, steer me away for fear of my betraying my ignorance, with delightful geniality."

"I wrote two sonnets in the evening before dinner. I find myself much slower at writing poetry and much less disposed to do it than two years ago. I don't think I have the real spring. I think I have a certain power of feeling the interest of certain aspects of nature; I have a somewhat microscopic eye, and find more beauty in hedgerows, deserted quarries, little pools and streams, railway-cuttings, back-gardens, than I do in great panoramas of mountains or in sensational prospects. I have a certain facility in language, and now and then a gleam of artistic excitement. But this is not enough, and I must, I think, resign all hopes of a poetical future. I fancy that two or three of my poems may get included in Victorian anthologies, but I cannot be a "bright particular star." John Lane has just sent me an account: my *Poems* out of print—260 of the *Lyrics* left and 230 of *Lord Vyet.* I shall publish one more volume and then shut up shop."

"My division awfully nice and good, patient, silent, attentive, obedient and rather interested. I wander wide in talk. But the classics are poor pabulum, I fear. I live in dread of the public finding out how bad an education is the only one I can communicate. We do nothing to train fancy, memory, taste, imagination; we do not stimulate. We only make the ordinary boy hate and despise books and knowledge generally; but we make them conscientious—good drudges, I think."

"(The end of the half). I have had a meek division, over whom I think I have rather tyrannised: very good, obedient, and on the whole keen pupils: and a perfectly angelic house—halycon days. . . . I seem to get credit for anything that I do just now. I must throw my ring into the sea."

"(At Dunskey). I discussed marriage with Miss Browne. We decided that the old maid was much happier than the old bachelor, because she generally had a circle and home ties—no such selfish ineffective loneliness as the old bachelor. True, I think. I wish I saw my way out. The engagement of both Mason and Carter, the only two members of the celibate brotherhood

of Truro, gives me hope; but I don't think it is good to marry after forty. Still I can believe that it is wisely withheld from me, partly as a *lenis castigatio* for my many infirmities and partly because I am not loyal-hearted.

" I am thankful the summer is over. What a strange and wonderful thing that I should be here, so richly surrounded with sweet things and good graceful people when I deserve so little. I never used to think I should live to be thirty, and even now I never dare to look forward more than a few months. It is inconceivable to me to think that the world will go marching on year after year and that I may still be there. And if not, where? . . . I drove away (from Dunskey) with sinking heart—tears in my eyes—like a schoolboy going to school. All evening I thought of what they would be doing. I cannot be grateful enough for all that the beloved place and the beloved people have been to me."

As for the question of marriage, so philosophically discussed with Miss Browne—she was a lady of very vivid and decided views, and I surmise that her part in the debate has lost some of its trenchancy—it was exceedingly like him to describe as " wisely withheld " things that he actively and resolutely kept at a distance. The people he did not want to see, the places he would not visit, were very apt to be removed out of his way by an inscrutable providence—to whose decree he submitted with perfect composure. There were those among his friends who for their part were not so meek; they refused to be so patiently relinquished. But he was not to be laughed out of his firm trust in a ruling that ruled out unwanted things; and one of them was marriage—or not indeed the state of marriage, but the necessary measures and steps thereto conducting. None of these, not even the first and commonest and most important, did he ever take; and sometimes he wished, he very regretfully wished, that he was already married, but he never had the least disposition to begin to be. Or *almost* never, did he

say?—for I hear him talk of it with cheerful freedom. It was a distinction with very little difference, in any case.

"*At Dunskey again, December*, 1898.—A conversation with him (St. Clair Donaldson*) about fogeydom. He said that he was losing keenness, becoming middle-aged; he didn't want to *do* things, but to be left alone with a book. I said that I was still inspired by intense preferences—still believed I was an unappreciated genius and should set the Thames on fire—continued successive assaults on the public, a perpetual battery at the door of fame—a renewed and feverish bastinado of the reading public. He said that it exonerated me from fogeydom. But we agreed that the only thing was to grow old gracefully."

"*Eton, February*, 1899.—I gave them (a party of colleagues) of my best wines and dishes. We smoked. At 9.30 Bonham Carter called to see me, and sate in the smoky, flaring, napkined dining-room—which was more like a little dining-room in Park Lane than the Attic feast of seven grave and poverty-stricken professors. I was vexed that he should come then.

"I read a few pages of Cory, which always brings up by cords of pathos and delight the deep well-water of the poetry of this life. I can't express what that book does for me.

"Met Her Majesty, who has shirked the crossing to Cimiez to-day, on Windsor Bridge—an outrider on a grey horse in black livery in front, with long whip, another behind. H.M. looked very old, heavy, melancholy, and almost purple in complexion. But she is a gallant old thing."

"*York Cathedral, Easter*, 1899.—The moment we entered the old spell fell on me: the fragrant scent of antiquity, the muffled sounds, the mild warmth, the

* Afterwards Archbishop of Brisbane, and now (since 1921) Bishop of Salisbury.

soaring roof, all affect me as few other things do. . . . I am sure, if there is any metempsychosis, that I was once a monk—or say a secular canon."

May 24, 1899, was Queen Victoria's eightieth birthday. Eton had again its part in celebrating the occasion; a jubilee hymn was sung, for which Arthur Benson had written a new birthday verse; and this time things went further.

"*May* 24.—To-day we met at 8.45 (no early school) in the playing-fields, but dismissed owing to downpour. At 9.15 we met in school-yard—a hot steaming day, like an orchid-house; marched up to the Castle, and after a wait got into the yard. The Queen was breakfasting in a room over the porch. The choirs sang very sweetly. We joined in the fourth verse only of the jubilee hymn, and my verse was beautifully sung afterwards. Then two madrigals, one very poor. A good many boys fainted, thirteen in all, and sat in a row, green-faced and bewildered, on a little bench under the wall. Sir A. Bigge came to fetch me to the Queen, hardly to my surprise; I was presented to the Duke of Connaught. Then we went upstairs and appeared in the corridor; the Queen sate rather in shadow, her white widow's cap showing very clear; she wore large round black spectacles. Soundy, the Mayor, preceded us; then Sir W. Parratt, to whom she made a little civil speech. Then I appeared, bowing, and drew as near as I dared. 'I must thank you for having written such a beautiful verse,' she said: 'it has been a great pleasure to me.' I bowed and withdrew, rather clumsily, as I had forgotten the backward walk, and only remembered it after a moment. However, I did not quite turn my back on the Queen, I think.

"But what was an *entire* surprise to me, and will remain with me as long as I live, was her voice. It was so slow and sweet—some extraordinary *simplicity* about it—much higher than I had imagined, and with nothing cracked or imperious, or (as the imitations misled me

into thinking) gobbly. It was like the voice of a very young, tranquil woman. The phrases sounded a little like a learnt lesson, but the *tone* was beautiful—a peculiar genuineness about it; I felt as if I really *had* given her pleasure. Her face was much in shadow, and confused; I couldn't see it clearly. But it was all very tremendous somehow; and though, if I had had the choice, I would not have dared to go, I am now thankful to have seen her and had speech from her." *

And let it here be noted that they met again; later in the year he dined with her privately at the Castle and had longer speech, to no less pleasing effect. In the following year, the last of her life, I lose count of the poetical commissions, already mentioned, with which he was from time to time entrusted. And then, early in 1901, "It is like the roof being off the house," he writes, "to think of England queenless."

Meanwhile, in the summer of 1899, comes the first sight of a place which for nearly twenty years was to be his home—much more intimately his home than any of the various houses that he acquired on his own account at different times. His mother, leaving Winchester, went to live in a beautiful old house in Sussex—Tremans, near Horsted Keynes. "I have *never* seen a more captivating place," writes Arthur; and indeed with its mellow ripeness and redness, its well-worn dignity, the rambling inconsequence of its panelled rooms, the sweetness of its garden from the great yew hedge by the lane to the pigeon-cote by the farm, Tremans had a spell that could be resisted by none who passed that way. The country around, the huge woods and green valleys and hidden streams of the Sussex Weald, between the Forest and the Downs, holds beauty everywhere, in all the weather of the year —and beauty exactly of the friendly, kindly sort that Arthur loved; he soon knew it by heart for miles

* Some of the foregoing extracts have been slightly condensed and abridged. From this point they will be quoted as they appear in the diary, and all omissions indicated.

in all directions. Tremans became very dear to him, and not less dear before long to his friends. A spirit reigned there of which it is difficult to speak rightly; for the right words should describe the light of the charity, the ring of the gaiety, the charm of the genius of Arthur's mother; and for those who knew and loved Tremans when she was there the memory is not to be matched by words. But Tremans will often be seen again in this book, and never without the happiness of the presence of Mrs. Benson.

The summer that was the beginning of Tremans was also, less fortunately, the end of Tan. That home of many holidays now passed out of the hands of the two friends (they had been tutor and pupil at Eton) who have already been named. Of these two also, Ainger and Howard Sturgis, there is much more to be heard in the future; but a sight of them shall not be missed during Arthur's last visit to Tan.

"*Tan-yr-allt, September* 14—. . . . Ainger and Howard between them certainly make wonderful hosts. A. has the organizing turn which is needed in these parties. He is good-humoured, tolerant, not talkative, but pungent, with a keen relish for humour; smiles more often than he laughs, and consequently when he is betrayed into a laugh it is a delightful sound. He sneezes once a day like a thunderclap. Howard, on the other hand, is observing, subtle, sensitive, smoothing over and adorning all social occasions with a perpetual flow of witty, unexpected, graceful talk that never palls or wearies. He will fall in with any mood, interpret any suggestion, make the most of any shy point, and give everyone the feeling of their own brilliance. All this has increased; he used to be capable of and to indulge in very malicious little strokes of satire, which were always true enough to make them bite. I was always conscious with a kind of fearful joy that he was in the house, and used to be inclined, when either he or I entered a room, to look at him curiously to see whether he was in the melting or the freezing mood. Now, somehow, I seem to have

drifted into a kind of quiet harbour with regard to him —and as a consequence of this element of uncertainty being abstracted, enjoy his society far more, am far more contented to be with him than ever, though perhaps less consciously."

Ainger, lean and stalwart, the generous and peremptory friend of so many decades of Etonians, was still at this time a housemaster in the school, though his retirement was near. Howard Sturgis (who lived near by in Windsor) is known to some as a writer of two or three novels of penetrating perception, and remembered and loved and missed by troops of friends for what he was to them—one whose friendship was apart, by itself, unlike any other in its original and enchanting quality. He died in 1920.

At Michaelmas of 1899 Arthur Benson moved into another house at Eton, the last he was to occupy there; he gave it the name it still bears, Godolphin House. Here he found more space and more convenience, but also at first more discontent. It was not to his boys that this was due; indeed it was rather a special moment of credit and renown in their annals. They had won the school cricket-cup that summer, as this chronicle should not omit to record; and to their house-tutor, as usual, they were the only mitigation—they and the division that he taught—of the oppression of his work. Loud and long as he groans under this, he never has a word for the boys in his charge that is not affection and pride. And here let me add that when he praises his fortune in ruling such a house, he expressly gives the merit, a large share of it, to the "dame" who divided the responsibility —to Mrs. Cox, the devoted friend and matron of his house throughout its history. Her name is always to be celebrated in this connection, as her health was always drunk with acclamation at the "old boys' dinner." And the servants, too, are not to be forgotten by us who recall their friendliness, their zeal, their good-natured tolerance of the ways

and whims of boys. The master of the house was loyally served, and he well knew it.

But before returning to his diary at Eton, I give another holiday picture—from his first visit to Rye, and to the house which long afterwards he was to occupy himself. He spent a night there at the beginning of 1900, the guest of Henry James.

"*Lamb House, Rye, January* 17, 1900.—Now let me dip my pen in rainbow hues—or rather let me be exact, finished, delicate, to describe the charm of this place. . . .

"Henry James, looking somewhat cold, tired and old, met me at the station: most affectionate, patting me on the shoulder and really welcoming, with abundance of *petits soins*.

"The town stands on a steep sort of island, rising from the great sea-plain. Inland it is separated from hilly country by one valley only; but south and south-east the flat plain stretches like a green chessboard for miles. You see the winding stream, very pale in the sunset, the shipyards, the houses of Rye Harbour, the strand dotted with Martello towers, the wooded heights of Winchelsea, the great ocean-steamers passing up and down channel, and the great green expanse of Romney Marsh.

"The town is incredibly picturesque. It has a mouldering castle, a great gateway, a huge church like a cathedral, a few gabled and timbered cottages—but for the most part is built of wholesome Georgian brick, with fine mouldings, good doorhoods, and with an air of Dutch trimness and bourgeois stateliness, like a cathedral town, which breathes tranquillity. We walked slowly up, and came to Lamb house. It is sober red Georgian; facing you as you come up is the bow-window of the garden-house with all its white casements —used by H.J. to write in in summer. The house has a tall door, strangely fortified inside by bolts, admitting into a white panelled hall. There are three small panelled sitting-rooms, besides the dining-room. The place has

been carefully done up, and is very clean, trim, precise, but all old and harmonious. . . .

"Dined simply at 7.30, with many apologies from H.J. about the fare. . . . He was full of talk, though he looked weary, often passing his hand over his eyes; but he refined and defined, was intricate, magniloquent, rhetorical, humorous, not so much like a talker, but like a writer repeating his technical processes aloud—like a savant working out a problem. He told me a long story about ———, and spoke with hatred of business and the monetary side of art. He evidently thinks that art is nearly dead among English writers—no criticism, no instinct for what is good. . . . He talked of Mrs. Oliphant, Carlyle—whatever I began. 'I had not read a *line* that the poor woman had written for *years*—not for years; and when she died, Henley—do you know him, the rude, boisterous, windy, headstrong Henley?—Henley, as I say, said to me, "Have you read *Kirsteen?*" I replied that as a matter of fact, no—h'm—I had not read it. Henley said, "That you should have any pretensions to interest in literature and should dare to say that you have not read *Kirsteen!*" I took my bludgeoning patiently and humbly, my dear Arthur—went back and read it, and was at once confirmed, after twenty pages, in my belief—I laboured through the book—that the poor soul had a simply *feminine* conception of literature: such slipshod, imperfect, halting, faltering, peeping, down-at-heel work—buffeting along like a ragged creature in a high wind, and just struggling to the goal, and falling in a quivering mass of faintness and fatuity. Yes, no doubt she was a gallant woman—though with no species of wisdom—but an artist, an artist—!' He held his hands up and stared woefully at me. . . .

"H.J. works hard; he establishes me in a little high-walled white parlour, very comfortable, but is full of fear that I am unhappy. He comes in, pokes the fire, presses a cigarette on me, puts his hand on my shoulder, looks inquiringly at me, and hurries away. His eyes are *piercing*. To see him, when I came down to breakfast

this morning, in a kind of Holbein square cap of velvet and black velvet coat, scattering bread on the frozen lawn to the birds, was delightful. . . . .

"We lunched together with his secretary, a young Scot. H.J. ate little, rolled his eyes, waited on us, walked about, talked—finally hurried me off for a stroll before my train. All his instincts are of a kind that make me feel vulgar—his consideration, hospitality, care of arrangement, thoughtfulness. . . . He seemed to know everyone to speak to—an elderly clergyman in a pony-carriage, a young man riding. Three nice-looking girls met us, two of fourteen and fifteen, and a little maid of seven or eight, who threw herself upon H.J. with cooing noises of delight and kissed him repeatedly and effusively, the dogs also bounding up to him. He introduced me with great gravity. . . . We got to the station; he said an affectionate farewell, pressing me to come again; I went away refreshed, stimulated, sobered, and journeyed under a dark and stormy sky to the dreary and loathsome town of Hastings."

II

1900—1903

"*Eton, February* 26, 1900.—Monday: hateful day of fierce, arid, consuming work, done, not for the improvement of the boys—indeed, apart from them—but to satisfy my critical colleagues. I go from school to school, with pupils and piles of exercises crammed in. I walked up to Windsor: some gleams of sun. Came down: saw Ainger and Cornish setting off for a walk, a thing they have done at 3.45 on Monday for thirty-five years—if only people would do something different! Ainger walks solidly, religiously, gravely. The boys all coming out of school, by the cannon—one talking to Bowlby with his hat off; they were doing this twenty-six years ago when I was a boy; and here I have been practically ever since, fast bound. I beat against the wires. What an odd poor thing life is—and yet should I be happier free? And that is the poorest thing of all, that the cage, the burrow, the haunt grows so dear. Watched a robin sing in my garden—hard-worked to keep himself fed; I suppose he was born, lived all his life and will die in this privet-hedge. Why should not I be content to do the same? And then it comes over me in a flash that I am nearly forty, and yet don't feel as if the serious business of life had begun, or as if I had really settled down to a profession—as if that was to come."

This year, 1900, was an uneventful but a troubled time—troubled by nervous depression, and still more

by these difficult doubts and questions. "I have no scholastic ambition whatever," he writes one day, "and I have, absurd as it may seem, immense literary ambitions. I am sure that the double work cannot be carried on much longer." To throw himself upon literature, once for all, seemed still too rash; and on the other hand, if he remained a schoolmaster, now was the time when he might be looking for larger honours and opportunities in his calling. Two important headmasterships happened before long to fall vacant, and for both he was strongly urged to offer himself as a candidate. He stood aside from these without much hesitation; it was easy to resolve that he would not go out to seek preferment, desiring it so little. But another possibility hung now in the air, nearer home; and this would in course of time bring a question much harder to determine. Did he wish to be headmaster of Eton?—for Warre was aging, his resignation was foreseen, and it was freely suggested in many quarters that Arthur Benson was the man to succeed him. It was a troubling prospect. However, there was still time to think of that; and meanwhile, daily more forcibly, the vexation of his work was turning his mind towards freedom. He went so far as to buy a house in Windsor—the Gate House, by the entrance to the Long Walk—against the day of his retirement. He never lived there in the event; but he dwelt upon the thought of it much more willingly than upon the other contingency of the headmastership. That would require a decision which he was glad to postpone while he might.

Such is all the account to be given of an uneasy year—except to note that in the course of it Tremans grew ever more dear and delightful, and that another agreeable chapter, that of Dunskey, was closed this summer, the tenancy of the Donaldsons having come to an end. And now an extract, not from the still too accessible diary, but from a more secluded notebook, will show how he thought of the headmastership in 1901.

"*May* 4, 1901.—Since the last entry in this book I have been keeping a much fuller diary. But people occasionally see the other; so I put a note down here of an interesting interview.

"I dined with Warre on Thursday, May 2. He told me as I went away that he wanted to see me 'to-morrow—any time.' I did not know what this could be about. I thought that perhaps H.E.L. had intimated to him my discontent, and he wished to ask me about it.

"I went in at 12.0, after school. He was sitting, looking over papers, and seemed unwilling to break off, but he motioned me to a chair, and then with great hesitation and a sort of nervousness, said that he had something on his mind to tell me, and had wished to say it for long—he wished me to take orders. He then went on to say that he could not be headmaster long—three or four years—and he hoped that I should succeed him. It needed an Eton man and a wise man, who would make wise changes and not fear popular clamour or the newspapers. He thought that in general ways I agreed with him about the tendency of reforms, and he wished to hand on the work to me. He should do all in his power to secure it—I should have to take my chance, of course, with other candidates. Then about orders—others would follow my lead; if I decided *not*, and it was, of course, a matter for my own decision, he would be the last person to judge me. . . . But he believed that a great career was before me, and that I ought to think of it. He bound me to *absolute* secrecy—to my nearest and dearest. And one thing touched me very much. He put his hand on my arm as we stood by the fireplace, and said, rather confusedly, with his hand over his eyes, 'I have unburdened my mind of this; I have long thought of it, and thought I *ought* to speak—I have not liked speaking—but I have spoken because I hold you liege' (or did he say *lief?*) 'and dear.' It is at a moment like that that I feel I could do anything for him.

"But really I hardly agree with him at all. I cannot take orders, of course. I am a faithful member of the

fold, up to a certain point. I am a believer; but a High Church Bishop would laugh at my position from the point of view of orders, and even H. Ryle would knit his brows. But this is not even a temptation. Prominent position and great work are so bound up in my mind with *gêne* and odious publicities and bonds of all kinds that I do not desire them; my heart does not leap up at the thought of it at all. Of course orders would get me a share of such pickings as there are, but I don't want loaves and fishes at that price. I should be afflicted with permanent moral asthma. The Devil who tempts me, if he does tempt me here, has done it in a very half-hearted way. Probably he thinks that he has his rod in my nostril, anyhow. God guide me in this strange world!"

There the matter lay, then, for the present, to be re-examined occasionally, but always to much the same result. Of taking orders there had never been any thought since youthful days; but it was not impossible that Warre's successor should be a layman, and this side of the question remained open accordingly, with nothing as yet to make the answer any clearer.

"*June* 17, 1901.—On Thursday last I went up to town to hear my *Ode to Music** performed at the opening of the new hall of the Royal College of Music. . . . To the Athenæum, where I entered with much shyness, and introduced myself as a new member, but was ordered about rather by the domestics. Under the wing of the Vice-Provost I lunched. At a little table by the door, laden with silver covers, sate Chamberlain, reading a *Westminster Gazette* held high up and close to his eyes. Occasionally he snapped food like a turtle. I found that the paper contained some offensive statements about himself. He is older-looking, paler, more lymphatic than formerly, but incredibly perky and hard, ploughing the air with his sharp nose and glassy eye; but he gave me

* Set by Sir Hubert Parry.

the impression of amiability. Asquith, looking like a bishop, was ranging the room; and many other well-known faces. But the club is neither so large nor so sumptuous as I had expected; the dining-room is rather dirty and odorous. The staircase mean: there should be full-length pictures of men in wigs and frock-coated, whiskered politicians—'retired' panthers,' as Tennyson said, smiling over puffed expanses of shirt-front. Instead, there are two rather improper nymphs in oily plaster, crouching one at each end of a sofa. . . .

"Then we drove to the Royal College of Music. A great gathering: and I saw many people I knew—Lloyd, Schuster, Alan Gray, and innumerable others near me. Parratt came and talked and expressed his entire approval. Stanford took up his place as conductor, and the National Anthem struck up as the Duke of Cambridge came in, with his face like a damaged double strawberry, looking very infirm. He was taken to a red arm-chair in the front, where he dozed; in the soft passage of a violin movement, a few minutes later, all the books and papers they had given him fell out of his old, drowsy hand on to the ground, and he did not even pick them up.

"What I liked about the performance was the way in which they (the students) sang and played, minding their business, with intense zest and inner pleasure, and with no *ad captandum* self-conscious glances. A boy, rather like Blake ma., in a short coat, played some Saint-Saens variations; very nervous when he came on, but getting better and playing triumphantly—a very beautiful, sad and solemn thing, like a soul resigned to death and welcoming it—and sitting afterwards beaming with inward delight and with the form of his countenance changed by having got it all over.

"A woman with a green-trimmed hat sang, or rather howled, a musical-box thing of Rossini's—rather well done, but not very attractive, though I did not hate it as Fred did. I always think that the passage about Rossini in Browning is a very unfair and unworthy one, and

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shows how hopelessly musical taste changes, and how unpardonable it is for one musician to give himself airs because he happens to be the vogue, airs of pontifical disapprobation. There is no absolute canon of beauty in music or in anything else; fifty years hence people will probably talk of Wagner as claptrap, and wonder how anyone could admire. The only dignity in art is the dignity of doing your best, whatever it is, without reference to praise.

"Still, the howling woman with her smiles, her roulades, her tremolos, her siren screams and sharp lightnings of sound was unpleasing. . . . But the look of the enthusiastic, quiet, devoted boys and girls was very pleasant. The Ode was magnificent. . . . It was very well received; while the students shouted 'author' I fled. . . .

"I walked away with Fred. These little crowded bursts interest and please me. Perhaps I should soon sicken of them, but as things are they make me discontented; I shudder at the idea of going back to look over piles of verses, patter into school, solve domestic squabbles. If I was not greatly interested in my boys I could not stand it."

"*King's College, Cambridge, August* 4.—My division did very well in trials; I took a very affectionate farewell of them and of halcyon days. I have *never* been so much at my ease, never felt myself so entirely in sympathy with a set of people: the whole thirty-six notes vibrated true to my touch. They sang like the grasshopper who leapt on the harp and took the place of the broken string. There was no question of governing: they answered to my smallest hint. This was not so much my own personal influence as a general harmony—every one in the right place. I am not conscious of having had to use influence or tact or persuasion, still less anger or displeasure. I told them that they were both good-humoured and sensible, and that I should long regret them. They poured photos on me—and real goodwill, I am sure. . . .

"At last I rushed off, drove across town—a great crowd at St. Pancras—got the 5.5. and was at Cambridge by 6.30.

"I experienced the most poignant and yet luxurious sensations. I have not been here for thirteen years, since I took my degree—partly huffiness at the policy of the college, partly affairs. As we drew near Cambridge all the familiar things began to come back: the inn at Whittlesford, where we used to have tea in the old bicycling days, the Gogs, the familiar fields, the conduit, etc. All the country was beautiful, the vegetation luxuriant. At Cambridge station a huge grain elevator and mill in buff brick—hideous, but impressive. Drove down to King's. . . . Everyone, porters, dons, bedmakers, were extraordinarily welcoming—chid me for my absence, overwhelmed me with kindness. I felt like coming home. . . .

"On Saturday did little businesses; breakfasted in Combination Room pleasantly, with fine Victorian plate. In the afternoon walked about Zion. Saw Queen's, a fine new chapel—Peterhouse, a beautiful place, but a stronghold of the Philistines. I *like* the (Peterhouse) chapel transparencies now; if only people would have faith, and keep work as long as it is careful, expensive, thought out and put up with love. Then in Pembroke garden, a beautiful, embowered, bird-haunted place. . . . To Emmanuel, and saw an elegant African black undergraduate, slim and nimble, playing lawn-tennis with Englishmen. All these gardens are trim and rich with flowers, much smarter than they used to be. I suppose that the married fellows system tends to harmonise; they seem to give up the gardens much more to undergraduates, while the little tutors hurry off to small, new, red-brick houses on the Trumpington road. The men, too, seem gentler and more decorous than of old; but I suppose only the mildest are up just now. . . .

"We went to an out-of-door concert in the new court (King's); when I remember it, it was a long, high wall with a kitchen-garden behind it, and a deserted little slip

of ground like a terrace where snapdragons grew. The bridge and river more ravishingly beautiful than ever. I remember so well standing there in a moonlit midnight, and hearing an owl snore in a hollow tree by the bridge. To-night a huge high fantasmal building, lit up—and a pleasing concert, sung by solid and sober-looking young men. . . . We lounged in silence, and smoked, the behaviour perfect. Lionel Ford sang my song, 'Twenty years ago.' I sate in a kind of happy dream, not regretting the old pleasant, sociable days. . . ."

"*Grosvenor Club, London, September* 8.—This morning I have devoted to papers and this diary. I am well in health, and undisturbed (for me) by ailments, though I cannot help dreading the future, and bothering myself about the little malady that grows and grows—*castigatio mea matutina est.*

"But, taking stock generally, I am somewhat cast down. I have had considerable success in a profession in which I am not really interested, and I have refused two big chances. But my motive in accepting such a post would not be a pure one. I should accept it because it gave me a position, and a standpoint, and a finger in the great pie, and dignity with other people, and general advertisement. People would listen to me and be more deferential if I were a headmaster, and all that is very pleasant. Then, too, I should know, if I wished, bigger people, and I should have things more or less my own way in my own yard. But I should not accept it from devotion, or as an earnest reformer, or as a man caring for extended influence, which he knows he possesses, or from conviction.

"Then, in literature, I *am* very ambitious indeed, though I grow lazier. In fact, I have little doubt that if I am to break with schoolmastering I must do so at once—that I shall never settle down to literary work otherwise, and that I shall inevitably lose the spring, the zest, the joy of literature. I *am* losing it; I write less, with much more difficulty, and have far less impulse to

write. But I am not rich enough for my modest desires. And I should be sorry to take up literature and find I couldn't do it—find myself poor and ineffective, with no particular place in the world. Schoolmastering at least gives me this, much as my whole nature now recoils against going back, like a squirrel into his rotatory drum, to plunge into whirling work, of which so much is absolutely useless. If we turned out our boys knowing anything, caring for anything, I should not complain. But eighty per cent. leave us ignorant of everything, even Greek and Latin, hating books, despising knowledge, admiring athletics, mistaking amiability for character—and that is what we sweat our brains out to produce. It is simply deplorable.

"Here is my dilemma: on the one hand a useful life, which bores me—on the other hand a life which is not useful, and which would probably bore me still more, but which I love. And still I hesitate; and what makes me despise myself still more is that even my hesitation is not noble-minded—not fearing to sacrifice usefulness, but mere timidity and habituation: the monkey in the kettle.

"*Sed tu mecum es; baculus tuus confortabit me.* . . .

"I say I write less—and yet I have written 20,000 words of this diary, 100 small octavo printed pages, in a month."

"*Eton, November* 3.—I record some of the most vivid dreams I have ever had. I was sitting in a kind of saloon-carriage, by the side of a lake. The rail on which my carriage stood went round the lake; the other dipped into it. I saw the metals going down into the clear water, and the waves lapping on the pebbles. I heard a noise; and at the top of a little heathery hill behind—the place was a moor—appeared a huge engine, like a traction engine, coming down at a simply *furious* pace, like a dragon, upon me. I saw the blue gleaming metal of which it was made; it flung out cataracts of black smoke, but I was not afraid. It dashed into the water by me, running on the submerged metals, drawing

a train of red trucks, empty, and simply tore across the lake, throwing off the water in huge jets over it, the smoke struggling through the foam, and disappeared with its train of trucks over a low hill. Then I was in a marble-paved hall, belonging, I knew, to some university, with rather a cross portress at a table in the centre. I could see the dim reflection of ourselves in the floor as we moved about. Then I was in a garden, playing with some children, an odd game played with golf balls and wooden spades: John Sarum in a brown Norfolk jacket. The garden was neglected and rather provincial, but jasmine grew profusely. In running to pitch a ball I saw an odd stone in a garden bed, a piece of crystal, which I took up, and, rubbing off the dirt, found it a statuette of a girl riding on a mule, loaded with grapes. I looked up and saw that E.W.B. had joined the game, in his cassock. I took it to him, and he smiled and touched it, and said, 'You shall yet return and bring your grapes with you.' Then he kissed me, and I felt the slight roughness of his cheek as I used to do as a child; then he blessed me very solemnly. The dream faded."

"*Eton, February* 13, 1902.—My work closes in, and I have had three perfectly disgusting and unbearable days, shuffling on in hideous impatience and irritability from one occupation to another, with letters and business accumulations. . . . It is useless to complain; but I will put down what my day was yesterday—Ash Wednesday—for the information of posterity.

"I rose about 7: school 7.30. I heard a Virgil saying-lesson, and the boys did Greek Exercise, while I made an abstract of some Old Testament history. At 8.30 I went out of school: breakfasted. I ought to have gone to the Commination Service, but I had such a pile of letters that I went to my study at 9.15, and wrote, without stopping, quite savagely, till 10.50, and then had not finished. School at 11, history; I questioned on a chapter, and gave a short abstract of all we had done, trying to knock in the divisions of it. At 12 I came

out, went to pupil-room, heard the Remove construe two lessons, looked over Fourth Form exercises and my Greek Ex. of the morning. Dinner at 2 with the boys, and wrote letters 2.30 to 3.30. Tatham came and I walked with him to Upton; back at 4.30. Tried to read up a translation paper for the evening, but was very weary and went gaping into school at 5—a Thucydides lesson, very dull, and went through the Greek Ex. Came out and worked at the translation paper and some Latin prose from 6 to 7. Then took a set of boys in Latin prose till 7.40, then a set in translation paper till 8.10. Dressed: went out to Goodhart for some dinner, 8.30. Came away at 9.40, and went round the house till 10.30. Then read a little, but weary and dissatisfied. So that out of sixteen hours I have practically had three in which I was not in some way professionally employed. I see that W. Johnson says in his diary that he averaged about nine hours a day. I don't think it is quite so much as that now. But I don't think it ought ever to be more than eight, and Sundays ought to be easier. I do not think I can ever face an Easter half again."

"*March* 1.—Warre came and took my division yesterday. We were doing Lysias. He was rosy and cheerful, and stood by me on the platform. I had been girding at the attenuated stuff, and he began praising it for its beauty and interest. He taught a little himself, making the boys construe at sight, and was pleased at their intelligence. Then he made them a little speech about *good taste* in writing, purity of style, avoidance of humour—saying that youthful humour was often offensive, and that it might well be written down, if only —'there, put your pen through it.' He spoke of his own sermons, and how after writing a few pages a horror came over him (I don't wonder) and he struck it all out. I have not often heard him preach a sermon that would not have been improved by this process. His greatness gleamed out through the loose and inconsequent talk—rambling metaphors, rapid quotations, quite unintelligible to the boys—like tongues of fire through

smoke. He roared so loud once or twice that the room rang, and my head began to buzz. Then he expressed himself as pleased and marched away. We felt flatter after he had gone. His warm praise of the necessity of learning to write English interested me: has he any terrific scheme in his head?"

"*April* 24 (my fortieth birthday) . . .—Now let me write a little sober survey of my life, as it turns upon the hinge. It is just half-past six, about which hour I was born.

"I am fairly happy—full of little plans and ambitions and interests. But I fear that most of these are very selfish. I don't think I want to serve; neither do I want to rule. . . . My face is set away from Eton, and towards the Meadows of Ease, that delicate place. Should I be happier? A.C.A. says bluntly that I should not, but I think that only money keeps me back. I have nearly £700 a year of my own*, and a pension would make it £800; so that it could not be imprudent to leave. Certainly my heart is more and more in writing, and less and less in teaching or administration. A very small thing would dislodge me hence. I put aside all ambition for the headmastership as merely futile. . . .

"And so I enter on a new phase, and I try to survey the plains of middle age with fortitude and faith. I hope I may slay some Canaanites. But what good is it to look forward? I am in the hands of God."

"*October* 13.—I dare say it is pusillanimous, but I can't help it. I can't slave on. . . . I shall be sorry to leave the beloved boys; but the sense of real peace that this decision has given me is so true and profound that I hardly doubt I am right thus to decide. I am really wearing out, and the burden cannot be supported.

"The scouts of the E.C.R.V. were all out along the river as we walked. We stopped and talked to the merry Davies. The lock-house has been renewed, and they are building new red brick cottages, not bad, by

* Most of this was derived from his savings at Eton.

Boveney; the elm lane there is charming, and the dovecote. It is a beloved place; but there are no glorified memories connected with my mastership here—no landscapes lit with love-light, or even great and absorbing friendships: plenty of interest and plenty of life, but sordid thoughts on the whole, knit up with self: some temperate and kindly *bienveillances*.

"W. Johnson says that the passions, the imprudences, are the things that one is glad and proud of afterwards. I wonder if this is true? I have no means of knowing.

"My growing decision has drawn a veil between Eton and me. I shall try to be kindly and generous and sweet-tempered while I stay, and leave nothing but friends—not rage or rhetoricise or grumble or grunt. I never was patient—never could do tiresome work because it was right, as one eats mutton. But I tried always, each time, to think it interesting, to think it was oysters and champagne; and I often succeeded—it was imported novelty that carried me through.

"I talked and taught well to-day, and worked very easily, though with loathing. But I had an interior peace."

And so he resolved to send in his resignation—not immediately, but as soon as a good occasion might present itself. Meanwhile, whatever he may say of his failure to write as easily as he used, his literary work was in fact extending, widening its scope, finding fresh opportunities at a great rate. The *Life of Archbishop Benson* had been published in 1899, and also in the same year a collection of the lives of Eton worthies, *Fasti Etonenses*. Since then he had produced another volume of poems, and a book in which his experience in his profession was very attractively reviewed and presented, *The Schoolmaster*. And he was already adventuring in new regions. The stories of *The Hill of Trouble*, and a kindred volume or two that soon followed, were written about this time; and now too he began (with *The House of Quiet*) that long line of confidentially reflective and anecdotal

books that were presently to enjoy so great and facile a success. Moreover there soon came, perhaps more fortunately, a commission to write the volume on D. G. Rossetti for the series of English Men of Letters, a very congenial piece of work. It was clear, then, that he could change his profession whenever he chose, with no fear of finding himself at a loss.

And it had now struck him that he might settle at Cambridge. It has been seen how he paid a visit to his old college, after long years of absence; and he enjoyed it so well that he at once decided—as he usually did decide, wherever he went—to acquire a house in the neighbourhood and live there for the rest of his days. Before long he had found and taken his house, the Old Granary, beyond Silver Street bridge; and the house in Windsor was forgotten as he promptly rearranged his prospect and planned a life of retirement at Cambridge. Perhaps it would have surprised him at the time to be told that he really was to live there, as he told himself, for the rest of his days: not indeed for long at the Old Granary, and by no means in retirement, but at Cambridge to the end.

However, there was still another year, 1903, at Eton, the year which was at length to bring hesitation to an end by an entirely unexpected stroke. It began in all the old vexation of spirit under the burden of the "system," and many a page of his diary might be added to those already given in which his exasperation breaks out and overflows. The refrain of them all is the same—the wasteful and wearisome routine, so ill contrived that it exhausts the patience of everybody and benefits none; and whether his lament was justified, whether his account of the results which the system yielded or failed to yield was a fair one, it is not for me to say; but it is obvious that a man who thought as he did on the matter could only feel an "interior peace" as he looked forward to his departure.

And now, for a complete change from the irritations of the working-day, let him describe a visit

that he paid this spring at Putney, a visit arising out of a correspondence on Rossetti with Rossetti's friend.

"*April* 4, 1903.—I left my house on a bicycle about twelve, and rushed up town after an unsatisfactory morning of odds and ends. I had been received by Mr. Watts-Dunton with a great amount of epistolatory ceremony, many courteous letters arranging my visit, written by a secretary. The day was dark and gloomy. I got to Putney about 1.15, and walked into the street. I asked my way to the house, expecting it to stand high up. I was in a very common suburban street, with omnibuses and cabs—and two rows of semi-detached houses going up the gentle acclivity of the hill. I suddenly saw I was standing opposite the house, a perfectly commonplace, bow-windowed, yellow-brick house, with a few shrubs in the tiny garden. I went up to the door, and was at once taken in by the maid. The house was redolent of cooking, dark, not very clean-looking, but comfortable enough, the walls crowded everywhere with pictures, mostly Rossetti's designs in pen-and-ink or chalk. I was taken into a dining-room on the right, looking out at the back. To the left the tall backs of yellow-brick houses: the gardens full of orchard trees in bloom: a little garden lay beneath with a small yew hedge and a statue of a nymph, rather smoke-stained: some tall elms in the background.

"Mr. Watts-Dunton came out and greeted me with great cordiality. He seemed surprised at my size, as I was similarly surprised at his—I had not remembered he was so small. He was oddly dressed in waistcoat and trousers of some greenish cloth, and with a large heavy blue frock-coat, too big for him, with long cuffs. He was rather bald, with his hair grown thick and long, and a huge moustache which concealed a small chin. He had lost his teeth since I last saw him, and looked an old man, though healthily bronzed and with firm small hands. After a compliment or two he took me upstairs. A pair of elastic-sided boots lay outside a door—the passage

thickly carpeted and pictures everywhere. We went quickly in, the room being over the dining-room.

"There stood before me a little, pale, rather don-like man, quite bald, with a huge head and dome-like forehead, a ragged red beard in odd whisks, a small aquiline red nose. He looked supremely shy, but received me with a distinguished courtesy, drumming on the ground with his foot, and uttering strange little whistling noises. He seemed very deaf. The room was crammed with books: bookcases all about—a great sofa entirely filled with stacked books—books on the table. He bowed me to a chair—'Will you sit?' On the fender was a pair of brown socks. Watts-Dunton said to me, 'He has just come in from one of his long walks'—and took up the socks and put them behind the coal-scuttle. 'Stay!' said Swinburne, and took them out carefully, holding them in his hand: 'They are drying.' Watts-Dunton murmured something about his fearing they would get scorched, and we sate down. Swinburne sate down, concealing his feet behind a chair, and proceeded with strange motions to put the socks on out of sight. 'He seems to be changing them,' said Watts-Dunton. Swinburne said nothing, but continued to whistle and drum. Then he rose and bowed me down to lunch, throwing the window open.

"We went down and solemnly seated ourselves, Watts-Dunton at the head, back to the light, Swinburne opposite to me. We had soup, chickens, many sweets, plovers' eggs. Swinburne had a bottle of beer, which he drank. He was rather tremulous with his hands, and clumsy. At first he said nothing, but gazed at intervals out of the window with a mild blue eye and a happy sort of look. Watts-Dunton and I talked gravely, he mumbling his food with difficulty. When he thought that Swinburne was sufficiently refreshed he drew him gracefully into the conversation. I *could* not make Swinburne hear, but Watts-Dunton did so without difficulty. . . . He seemed content to be silent, and I was struck with his great courtesy, especially to Watts-Dunton—this was very touching. Watts-Dunton made

some criticism on Scott (Swinburne having said that *The Bride of Lammermoor* was a *perfect* story)—about the necessity when Scott became bookish of translating him into patois. 'Very beautiful and just,' said Swinburne, looking affectionately and gratefully at Watts-Dunton; 'I have never heard that before, and it is just; you must put that down.' Watts-Dunton smiled and bowed. Later on Watts-Dunton attributed some opinion to Rossetti: 'Gabriel thought—' etc. Swinburne smiled, and said, 'I have often heard you say that, but' (he turned smiling to me) 'Mr. Benson, there is no truth in it. Rossetti had no opinions when I first knew him on Chatterton and many other subjects, and our friend here had merely to say a thing to him, and it was absolutely adopted and fixed in the firmament.' Watts-Dunton stroked Swinburne's small pink hand, which lay on the table, and Swinburne gave a pleased schoolboy smile.

"Lunch being over, Swinburne looked revived, and talked away merrily; he bowed me out of the room with ceremony. Watts-Dunton seemed to wish me to stay, and Swinburne looked concerned, drew nearer to him, and said, 'Mr. Benson must come and sit a little in my room'; so we went up. Swinburne began pulling down book after book, and showed them to me, talking delightfully. As he became more assured he talked rhetorically; he has a full, firm, beautiful pronunciation, and talks like one of his books; occasionally his voice went into a little squeak. He suddenly rose, and went and drank some medicine in a corner. He had on an odd black tail-coat, a greenish waistcoat, slippers, low white collar, made-up tie—very shabby indeed. There was an odd, bitter, bookish scent about the room, which hung, I noticed, about him too. He talked a little about Eton and Warre, saying, 'He sate next me many a half, and he was a good friend of mine.'

"Then Watts-Dunton proposed that I should go; but Swinburne said, half timidly, 'I hope there is time just to show Mr. Benson one of these scenes.' 'Well, one scene,' said Watts-Dunton, 'but we have a lot of business

to talk—you read it to him.' He took the book I was holding—the Arden play—and read very finely and dramatically, with splendid inflections, a fine scene. His little feet kicked spasmodically under his chair, and he drummed on the table. He was pleased at my pleasure—and then took up some miracle plays, and told me a long story of the Annunciation of the Nativity—the sheep-stealer, called Mack, who steals a sheep and puts it into the child's cradle; the shepherd comes to find it and laughs: then the angel appears. 'Do you think Mr. Benson will be shocked if I show him what Cain says?' he said, and showed me, giggling, a piece of ancient schoolboy coarseness. Watts-Dunton smiled indulgently; then at last he took me away. Swinburne shook hands with great cordiality, a winning, shy kind of a smile lighting up his pale eyes. Watts-Dunton led me off, saying, 'I like him to get a good siesta; he is such an excitable fellow; he is like a schoolboy—unfailing animal spirits, always pleased with everything; but he has to take care.' He was much amused at Swinburne asking me if I was his contemporary at Eton.

"I was somehow tremendously touched by these two old fellows living together (Swinburne must be 66, Watts-Dunton about 72) and paying each other these romantic compliments and displaying distinguished consideration, as though the world was young. I imagine that the secret of Watts-Dunton's influence is that he is ready to take all the trouble off the shoulders of these eminent men—that he is very sedulous, complimentary, gentle—and that he is at the same time just enough of an egotist to require and draw out some sympathy. . . .

"Watts-Dunton kept all through our long talk (we sate from 2.30 to 5) reverting to himself: how *he* was the only man not dominated by Rossetti: how dogs wouldn't bite him: how as a boy at school *he* dominated all the school, so that no boy ever got a hamper without bringing it to him to choose what he liked best (he called it a very big fashionable private school): how the boys would have carried him about all day on their shoulders if he had

desired it: and how no edict of the masters would have availed, if he had given contrary orders.

"He sighed heavily at one time and said that he himself had not done what he ought to have done in literature. At this I poured in a good deal of rather rancid oil and ginger-wine. He smiled indulgently and deprecatingly. He then said that the charge of Rossetti had been very anxious—the stratagems to reduce chloral, the dancing attendance on his whims; but he added, 'In his friendship and the friendship of Swinburne I find my consolation.' This I did not think sincerely said.

"'Swinburne,' he said several times over, 'is a mere boy still, and must be treated like one—a simple schoolboy, full of hasty impulses and generous thoughts—like April showers.' He added, 'His mental power grows stronger every year—everybody's does. He is now a pure and simple improvisatore.'

"Watts-Dunton sipped a little whiskey-and-water and smoked a cigarette. He sometimes reclined in an armchair, sometimes came and sate near me. I sate in a great carved chair of Rossetti's (very fine—Indian), facing the light. There were fine pictures everywhere; a *most* interesting one of Rossetti reading poetry to Watts-Dunton in the Green Room at 16 Cheyne Walk, by Dunn (he gave me a reproduction of this); a Shakespeare in a heavy frame; beautiful witches of Rossetti's, in crayons, pale red, peeping out of great gold frames. Outside were the white orchard blooms and trees, and I arranged myself so that I could see no house-backs—and we might have been at Kelmscott. . . .

"I had intended to go earlier, but we talked on; occasionally he went to his secretaries. Before I went we had some tea; and then he brought in two little framed pictures (Rossetti in the Green Room, and Kelmscott), prepared for his illustrated *Aylwin*, and the illustrated edition of *Aylwin* itself, and gave them to me, with many expressions of kindness and cordial offers of help. '*Come* and see me,' he said; 'don't write. My correspondence is a simple curse. I have thirty letters a post.' (I wonder what about?) He wrote my name

in the book. He talked a good deal about Lord de Tabley, or rather a good deal of the influence he had over de Tabley!

"I can't understand this enigma—how this egotistical, ill-bred little man can have established such relations with Rossetti and Swinburne. There must be something fine about him—and his extraordinary kindness is perhaps the reason; but his talk, his personal habits, and his egotism would grate on me at every hour of the day. And yet, 'He is a hero of friendship,' said Rossetti.

"I went out with my precious parcel—back by train in driving rain to Windsor."

The midsummer half wore away at Eton, and still he had not found the right moment or the conclusive reason for fixing the date of his resignation. And now at last it was decided for him.

"*Eton, July* 24, 1903.—A mysterious wire from Esher to ask me to come over to Orchard Lea—the King wished him to speak to me on a matter of importance! It must be that Lord Churchill wants me to take his boy next year. . . . "

"*July* 25.—Worked hard with much impatience, and biked over to Orchard Lea. Could not find a front-door; but eventually left my bike by an iron gate, and, advancing, rang at a small door. I was shown in through a nice dark hall, and found Lady Esher, very good-natured and friendly; Esher in the garden in a summer-house, airily dressed, reading, with his son beside him, in a Guards' tie, also reading. Lady Esher would have settled down for a talk, but E. said, 'I am going to take *him* for a talk.'

"The pretty garden lay all before us, with its shady walks and banks and terraces; in the midst a huge bed of red roses, just crumbling to their fall; to the left an alley down which I have often peered from the road; beyond, quiet fields and woods. In the whole of the

long talk that followed my thoughts and recollections are curiously knit with the colours and textures of flowers in the beds we paced past.

"He made me a statement at once, with a kind of smile, yet holding it back for effect. The King was going to bring out the correspondence and letters of Queen Victoria (1836—1861), and would I edit it with him (Esher)? I was to be sounded, and then offered it. He had seen the Archbishop, who entirely approved.

"Of course I had no real doubt. Here am I, crushed with work at Eton, hardly strong enough to wriggle out, and yet with no motive to go at any particular minute. Suddenly in the middle of all my discontent and irritability a door is silently and swiftly opened to me. In the middle of this quiet sunny garden, full of sweet scents and roses, I am suddenly offered the task of writing or editing one of the most interesting books of the day—of the century. I have waited long for some indication—and was there ever a clearer leading?

"He told me many details. . . . I asked for a little time, decorously to decide; but all the time my heart told me I had decided already, or rather that it had been decided. . . .

"I had a bad night—and no wonder; shirked chapel, and then wrote two letters, one to Warre, resigning as simply as I could, and one to Esher, accepting."

"*August* 13.—. . . The warmth and affection of the letters I get about Eton fairly astound me. It is difficult not to pose in writing about this, but I will say exactly what is in my mind. I felt myself at Eton to be rather popular, knowing a few masters well, my opinion rather deferred to by these few; but living a very quiet, and increasingly quiet life, absorbed in my own thoughts and in my own work. But I get a series of jeremiads; Eton won't be the same place, disastrous news, a subject too painful to talk about; the dear Rawlins says that he can't keep up a show of mirth with his guests, and that it has been a horrible blow to him, as he depended on me for everything. Of course a good

deal of this is affection generously expressed. . . . But, making all allowances, there is a residue of praise which fairly astonishes me, and which won't make me conceited, because I don't realise or believe it. Each letter pushes me up on a pedestal for a few minutes; but I soon get down again, and go scrambling on as usual. . . .

"I sent off all my circulars in the evening—writing a few words on each, or a letter. It is melancholy work, and I hate dropping all these beloved boys and their destinies; but I can't do otherwise. I should be crushed out of shape by the work at Eton. I would gladly continue to keep a house and do some teaching, or teach alone; but the whole burden I can bear no more. Besides, I have no *call* to schoolmastering. The wonder is that, caring for it so little in many ways, I do it as well as I do."

"*September* 27.—A dreadful night of dreams—voyages on wide blue waters, interspersed with many interviews with the Prince Consort. In one of these we were by a tea-table—we two alone. He helped himself liberally to tea, cake, etc.; then he turned to me, and said, 'You observe that I offer you no tea, Mr. Benson.' I said, 'Yes, sir.' 'The reason is that I am forbidden by etiquette to do so, and would to God I could alter this!' He was overcome with emotion, but finished his tea, after which a grave man came and served me with some ceremony."

So his departure was announced for the end of this year, 1903. He invited all his "old boys" as usual to a house-dinner at Eton in November; and on this occasion, the last and largest of our annual assemblies, we did our best to let him see that we knew what we owed him. A few words from his account of the evening (November 14) may forgivably be quoted:

"I thought what nice good sensible amiable boys they all were—of the best sort; unaffected, affectionate, simple, and yet with plenty of quiet *savoir faire*. They are just

the sort of boys I should have desired them to be; and I suppose one's desire, often invoked, tells, in spite of all one's incompetence."

"*December* 8.—In the evening I had my last Private. I examined the boys in history. They did very well. As they filed out I sate wondering—the lights bright, and a big fire blazing, flickering over the benches and the maps, and the inky forms, and the old books that I have known so long. How clear to me the picture of *my* tutor is, and the pupil-room, and the gaslight—it is strange to me to think that I too am part of the memory-pictures of some boys.

"Well, I have generally liked my Private, when I have once begun, though generally very unwilling to go down. . . . I feel a little tearful at the idea of the work and the briskness and the young life all about—and that all over; but I don't for one instant repent, and I would not alter my decision for one second, even if I could. The time has come naturally, and I must add very happily and sweetly to an end; the boys have been at their very best this half—sweet-tempered, considerate, good. And I have not slackened steam the least, but have bucketed on to the very end. . . ."

"*December* 16.—All the morning I worked; boys dropped in to say good-bye. But the joy of the holidays was too much for them, and I would not have it otherwise. . . .

"Then Alec Cadogan dropped in and came to lunch; and by 2 all the boys were gone. Then I walked with the Provost at his request; he was very pleasant and fatherly. . . .

"I came back; and it struck very chill on my heart, I confess, to see my hall and stairs all dismantled—the cases in the dining-room—the old life all breaking up and going. Well, it has been a happy time—happier and happier, in many ways. And most of all I thank God for giving a very timid, feeble and weak-minded person the chance of doing a little useful work. . . .

"I found a despatch-box and a note from Rawlins that rather broke my heart. . . Then Edward Ryle came, in tears, to say good-bye. That is a kind heart. Now I write these last few lines, with all the trampling and din of the packers downstairs. But I am going to dine with Tatham, and shall try to be cheerful. I am a curious mixture of sensitiveness and hardness. There seem to be watertight doors in my mind which I can shut, but only on great occasions; I am dimly conscious that all is not well within, but I can talk and be interested and jest in the furthest room.

"And anyhow, God bless Eton, and the dear boys, and my old comrades here—and never mind me! I think I do care more that things should go well here, and that the boys should be pure-minded and public-spirited, than anything else. I wish they could learn something too. But that will be done next, and I shall rejoice with all my heart."

III

1904

He exulted in the novelty of a holiday with no return to school at the end of it. He soon took possession of his house at Cambridge, the Old Granary, wedged between road and river, its windows overhanging the mill-pool and the melodious weir and the pasture of Sheep's Green; and here he began to renew his relations with the place that he had neglected for so long. It was a sudden change, no doubt, from his position and authority and much-befriended state at Eton—to Cambridge, where indeed he had old friends not a few, and where all doors at once flew open to welcome him, but where as yet he had no hand in the business and no part of his own in the life of the university. It was new and strange to find himself a private and irresponsible person; but it was the condition that he had desired from afar, and for the present he liked it very well. Never at any moment, now or later, had he the faintest twinge of regret for the life that he had abandoned; the task of the schoolmaster dropped off him as easily as a load from his back, and he went forward, rejoicing in his freedom.

It was still at Eton, however, not at Cambridge, that he spent the greater part of 1904. He set to work without delay upon the correspondence of Queen Victoria; and for this it was necessary at first to stay within reach of Windsor Castle, where the vast collection of papers to be examined was stored in the Round Tower. He lodged accordingly with Ainger, who had now resigned his mastership and was living

in the house, Mustians, that he had built for himself at Eton. Here Arthur Benson spent some months in great content. The mornings he passed in consuming his work in the Round Tower, fastening upon it in a rage of concentration that brought him to the end of his scrutiny of the papers before the year was out; and after the morning his time was his own, and now as never before he could enjoy Eton with a mind unburdened. Mustians was the most sociable of houses, always open in hospitality to the masters and the boys of the school. In these conditions Eton was agreeable indeed; and with the opportunity of leisure he could find many new friends among the boys—of whom Edward Horner should especially be named, and Julian Grenfell; friends of a generation on which the war was to fall unsparingly, so that hardly one of them now survives. And with all these interests to make the year a notable one, there was still room for more. He edited the Queen's letters with one hand, and under the other his own literary work ran forward unchecked; for in this year he wrote the exceedingly popular *Upton Letters*, and also a volume on Edward FitzGerald, his second contribution to the series already mentioned.

Between whiles he returned when he could to Cambridge; and there one day, early in the year, strolling through the Backs and by the river, he chanced to turn into the court of Magdalene, and was greatly struck by the charm of that secluded little college, unfamiliar to him. The mastership was vacant at the time, and the future of Magdalene none too promising, for the college was small and poor; and he wrote that evening in his diary of the wish he had felt, standing in the court, that good days might be in store for it—and even that he might himself have had a hand in helping it to flourish. He remembered his wish when a little later the name of the new Master of Magdalene was declared. It was his old friend, Stuart Donaldson, of Eton; and within a few months Donaldson had proposed to the college, and the

college had unanimously agreed, that a fellowship should be offered to Arthur Benson. Nothing could have been more welcome; it was exactly the kind of position that he had begun to desire at Cambridge, and he accepted the offer with deep satisfaction. Already in this year he had refused more than one invitation of note from other universities, and now indeed he could feel that he was justified. As a Fellow of Magdalene he could look forward to a life of work and companionship entirely to his mind; he only hoped that he might be left to enjoy it in peace.

And it happened that immediately after his installation at Magdalene in the autumn, news came from Eton that disturbed his peace not a little. Warre's resignation of the headmastership was announced; and so all the old doubts and questions were let loose again, and soon they would have to be faced in earnest. It was an unlucky moment. Not only had this attractive prospect just opened at Cambridge, but the harmony of his days at Eton was now disturbed by a controversy, a clash of opinion in which he bore a leading and an outspoken part. In educational matters he was a keen "reformer," which naturally meant that on one side he was a bold pioneer, on the other a rash innovator; and in a dispute which had arisen at Eton—not connected with the headmastership—strong support of his views on one side had met, not strangely, with strong opposition on the other. Perhaps he was inclined to make a personal matter of a simple attack upon his opinions; but anyhow he slipped into a mood of displeasure with Eton and its ways, or a habit rather than a mood, which did not brighten the thought of returning to Eton as headmaster. On one point he was quite decided, and remained so; he would not come forward as a candidate for the post. And if nevertheless it was offered him, what then? He preferred to leave the question with a sincere hope that the offer would not be made.

"*Eton, February* 12.—I went up to the Castle and met the pleasant Miles, the Inspector. . . . They had prepared me a great *bedroom* as well as a sitting-room, but I altered that, and took a small room adjoining the sitting-room. The interior of the Tower is *most* quaint and interesting—odd passages, with oak arches, and a sort of open place in the centre, all hung with pictures of Prussian and English soldiers, as in the passage down to the Castle. I am to approach it by the other stairs. But this is inconvenient as the place is locked up to an extent I had not realized, and I have no key—I must write to Esher about this.

"My own room is a big room, hung with Hogarth engravings and good furniture—a white chair with pink satin on wheels was used by the Queen. I did not use the room to-day as it was not ready, but worked in the strong-room, and went through an interesting lot of Melbourne's letters—beginning with one on the morning of the accession. His writing is very hard to read. It was odd to sit in this big room, all surrounded with shelves, with the deep embrasure full of guns. The wind roared and the rain lashed the window. I was amused and happy.

"I went down about 1.30—lunched and walked with A.C.A. We went through, just as everyone was hurrying into school—'and I not there!' But I must not be silly about this, or let myself feel that the busy life was a really happy one—it was terribly irksome at the end and for a long time.

"The boys are very nice and greet me with great warmth. We dined with Goodhart. This again was rather a nightmare, in my own room, with my old furniture, and my own servants. G. was in much pain, I saw, but got through gallantly. He was not well enough to go into the House—so I just went round as in the old days; and I confess that this was very painful indeed, though I hope I did not show it. I did not know I had so much heart; and what I had was 'wae.' But it is better to get things over at once and not to shirk them. Mrs. James wept to see me. So did Martin on meeting me in the street. . . ."

"*Cambridge, April* 8.—Such a batch of interesting letters.

"*Stuart Donaldson is Master of Magdalene!*—I could really envy him this. I have thought very tenderly of the poor little College—so beautiful and stately and venerable, and yet so out of elbows and out of heart. I made a prayer that I might be perhaps allowed to raise her up. There are very few posts in England I desire; but this is one—I should like a small, definite, thorough job to do. I don't suppose I *should* like it at all really—I shouldn't like stiff Fellows, and feeble, querulous undergraduates, and fading revenues; and then the endless hospitality and the probability of having to take a lot of College work—and the Vice-Chancellorship—it would not *really* suit me in the least; yet I would have taken it with courage and desire—probably from the wrong motives. Anyhow I am *not* offered it (though I thought from a chance remark the other day that I might be).

"Well, Donald has taken it; and he is an *ideal* person. He is kind, simple, hospitable—his wife is exactly in the right place. They are well-off. He is industrious; the undergrads will adore him; he will coach the boat, he will do everything I could not do, and lift the place on his shoulders. All that is wanted is that he should go and laugh in the courts, once in each, and the place will recover heart at once. He wrote me a very affectionate letter. . . ."

For an Easter holiday he chose, as usual, a country inn, this time the Lygon Arms at Broadway, with H. F. W. Tatham for his companion. The following account of one of his days of exploration is typical of very many, in this and other years.

"*Broadway, April* 18.—A day of settled summer weather—cool easterly breeze and a hot sun. I dreamt furiously, and rose irritable. We rode to Hinton, starting 10.45. It is an unimpressive road, and distant views were all blurred in haze. But at Hinton itself we

found a beautiful old gateway leading to a manor, and a rather dull little over-restored church; but such a quiet out-of-the-world place. On getting off at the station found myself hot and slack; a pleasant, rather loquacious, young porter, with Birmingham manners. Train to Ashchurch, a mysterious junction, where three lines meet, and where one line goes across another almost at right angles. You can see from Ashchurch station a huge length of line—five miles, I should say, at least, quite straight. The old church looks on with melancholy over the roofs of farm buildings. Then to Gloucester; and rode in to the Cathedral through a murky, commercial-looking sort of town, of chimneys, and yards with piles of timber, and gasworks and ugly rows of red-brick houses. Then on turning into College Green, or whatever they call it, all is peace; and that exquisite Cathedral is surrounded by these quiet houses of infinite variety. Many of them red-brick Georgian places—a couple of thin-legged gaitered ecclesiastics, one in shovel-hat, one in square cap, were walking briskly up and down the path of the Chapter garden. We went in, strolled about, read inscriptions, stared at statues. There is a *Jenner*, which, though of white marble, tends to convey the impression that he had a heavy cold and a red nose. There are two angels apparently squabbling over a medallion, on which is depicted a very bluff and fierce old man in high collars. . . .

"I came here with Papa twenty-five or twenty-six years ago, and it is odd how little of the detail I can remember. We put up at the Bell. He had no sense of comfort, and we sate miserably in a pokey inn drawing-room with three frozen females—and then we had prayers in his bedroom and said vespers, I think, at great length—the chambermaid coming in in the middle, a grief to me. Papa always felt the need of economy at an inn—had a small bottle of claret, out of which we each had one glass, and then it was corked up for next night. He would have liked to be comfortable, but didn't know how, I think—his fear of waste was so strong. I

remember wandering about the first evening and finding a shockingly profane practice going on in a strikingly beautiful little church near the Cathedral. I don't remember much else except his fearful avoidance of all resident dignitaries and his horror of being possibly involved in social claims—as if an English Bishop in a shovel-hat could wander for days about a Cathedral close, and no civilities offered him!

"We went round [to-day] with an old, very pompous and tiresome verger, who had got his lesson by heart, and could answer no question outside of it. I don't want to be taken round, and *lectured*. I want to wander about, ask questions, and be just shown interesting things if I fail to notice them for myself.

"What impressed me most of all were three tombs. Poor Edward II, looking so smooth and handsome and weak, with his delicate nose and eyes, and his carefully curled beard. Then *Osric*, a grim old Saxon, with a shaven upper lip and archaic beard, like a dissenting grocer. Then a *noble* (fourteenth century) wooden painted figure of Robert, Duke of Normandy, in mail, with a red mantle, as if starting up from sleep.

"I like the organ and the close screen; but the stalls are poor—and they have put in weak Gothic desks and a feeble little throne, like a Punch and Judy show, and put the fine Jacobean woodwork into the nave, while upstairs are a few splendid Corinthian columns and carved panels of fruit and flowers of a destroyed baldacchino. Heart-breaking!

"Mr. Kempe* is *everywhere*. I really begin to *hate* his glass; the same simpering faces everywhere. It seems to me that he has entirely crystallised into a tradition, and is simply throwing out glass on the same lines without the slightest thought or intellectual ardour. . . . The Lady Chapel is delicious, with its coloured ray and its many lines—and its galleried chantries high up. We visited Bishop Benson's grave put away in a gallery—and then to fill up the cup of my happiness, someone, quite unskilled, came and practised on the organ; the

* Mr. C. E. Kempe, the distinguished artist of church-decoration, was a friend and neighbour of the Bensons in Sussex. He died in 1907.

music came to me like a heavenly manna—music just fills up the impression one wants from a great noble building like that; sight is satisfied, and hearing still athirst. The rolling of the pedals, the shrill principals echoing in the roof seemed to me not sound, but almost some sweet and tangible potion. We loitered about, looking at houses, went through these splendid cloisters, still all fitted for active and stately life; then we rode off through the sunny flat to Cheltenham—the wind somewhat against us—but the bluffs of the Cotswolds looking very fine on the horizon—a church crowning a hill on the right, which rose very steeply out of the green flat. As we neared Cheltenham began to meet odious leisurely persons, male and female, riding together, conscious of great social superiority.

"Cheltenham is a *terrible* place; its size, its respectability, its boulevards, its rows of good houses, its generally townified air, make it insupportable—yet the bleak hills look over the house-roofs. We turned into one street and could have believed ourselves in a foreign town—a bright broad place of white houses, with an avenue of planes—a string-band playing, little Victorias plying about, children with sunhats, a chattering crowd. It was rather pleasant. . . .

". . . Then we began to ascend Cleeve Hill. Passed a very charming old red-brick farm among walnuts halfway up; but new houses are perching themselves everywhere, like foul birds of prey. Still the view is *noble*—a huge wide-watered plain, full of fields, hamlets, woods and streams for miles, ending in shadowy hills. The haze dimmed and gilded it all. Gloucester tower stood out black and dark. The Hill itself quite wild and downlike at the top. But there were trams ascending and descending, elderly military men taking constitutionals—wayside restaurants with people having tea, young people sporting upon the grass-grown downs. We reached the top, with its four cross-roads, and in a moment were in silence and ancient rustic peace—not a soul to be seen; but Winchcombe 800 feet below, and Sudeley Castle in its woods.

"Two little things I noticed in Cheltenham which I must record; one a complacent, red-faced, flourishing-looking old gentleman, apparently in bed, at an upper window open to the street, suffering, I suppose, from gout, and looking most benevolently about him. The other, a very different kind of invalid, pale, worn, sunken over the temples, with lank hair; driving with his mother —he was quite a young man—she, looking so tenderly at him, said something as we passed—he frowned and shook his head. He looked *afraid*.

"We rode quickly through Winchcombe, by familiar roads, and were soon comfortably at home. . . ."

"*London, April* 29.—I found Childers* [at the Athenæum] and we arranged details of work. We then dined quietly, and went to smoking-room. There entered Henry James, Thomas Hardy and another, an owlish man, lantern-jawed and bald, with a mildness of demeanour which I disliked, but which I am conscious that I am apt to assume, when shy.

"I took H.J. to a secluded seat, and we had a talk. . . . I questioned him about his ways of work. He admitted that he worked *every* day, dictated every morning, and began a new book the instant the old one was finished. He said it was his only chance because he worked so slowly, and excised so much. I asked him when the inception and design of a *new* book was formed; and he gave no satisfactory answer to this except to roll his eyes, to wave his hand about, to pat my knee and to say, 'It's all *about*, it's about —— it's in the air —— it, so to speak, follows me and dogs me.' Then Hardy came up and sate down the other side of me. I make it a rule *never* to introduce myself to the notice of distinguished men, unless they recognise me; Hardy had looked at me, then looked away, suffused by a misty smile, and I presently gathered that this was a recognition—he seemed hurt by my not speaking to him. . . . Then we had an odd triangular talk. Hardy could not hear what

* His old friend and contemporary, H. R. E. Childers (who died in 1912), was now associated with him in the work on Queen Victoria's correspondence.

H.J. said, nor H.J. what Hardy said; and I had to try and keep the ball going. I felt like Alice between the two Queens. Hardy talked rather interestingly of Newman.... He said very firmly that N. was no logician; that the *Apologia* was simply a poet's work, with a kind of lattice-work of logic in places to screen the poetry. We talked of Maxime Du Camp and Flaubert, and H.J. delivered himself very oracularly on the latter. Then Hardy went away wearily and kindly. Then H.J. and I talked of Howard's *Belchamber*.* H.J. said that it was a good idea, a good situation. 'He kindly read it to me; and we approached the dénouement in a pleasant Thackerayan manner—and then it was suddenly all at an end. He had had his chance and he had made *nothing* of it. Good Heavens, I said to myself, he has made nothing of it! I tried, with a thousand subterfuges and doublings, such as one uses with the work of a friend, to indicate this. I hinted that the *interest* of the situation was not the *experiences*—which were dull and shabby and disagreeable enough in all conscience, and not disguised by the aristocratic atmosphere—not the *experiences*, but the *effect* of the fall of wave after disastrous wave upon Sainty's *soul*—if one can use the expression for such a spark of quality as was inside the poor rat—that was the interest, and I said to myself, "Good God, why this chronicle, if it is a mere passage, a mere ante-chamber, and leads to nothing."'

"I think I have got this marvellous tirade nearly correct. . . ."

"*Eton, May* 9 . . . In the evening we dined with Warre. . . . I sate next Warre, who was very pathetic. He was very kind in manner; he led me down to dinner with his arm in mine; and I did love him; but he struck me as ill and weak and worn out, without spring or enthusiasm, indolent and rather sad. He complained of not feeling well, he drank a green medicine during dinner. He said he was getting deaf; he was silent; and for all his strength and full-bloodedness he looked

* Howard Sturgis's novel, *Belchamber*, had just then appeared.

haggard. After dinner he led me away and gave me a leaving-book—a Gray. He had written my name in it, and I thought had prepared a little speech to make me; but he stood dumb and embarrassed, holding the book in his big hands. Then he suddenly put it into mine, and I saw his eyes were full of tears; he shook my hand silently—and I confess it moved me inexpressibly. This big, strong, successful man, with all his work and vigour—and holding on in this melancholy way to work he cannot do. But I felt nothing but pity and affection. Then he said, 'I look forward to your having a long, useful and happy life—and sometimes, when I am gone—*meminisse mei*.' I could not speak; and we came back to the drawing-room; Mrs. Foljambe played some sweet little soft tunes—Norwegian—and Warre asked for an old piece, which he said had often composed him; then we settled down into dulness again until we went away. But I felt as if I had received somehow a patriarchal blessing. . . ."

"*Eton, August* 4.—I worked like a black at the Castle and have sent off 167 slips. . . .

"Horribly and detestably hot. I went out for a bicycle ride and was caught in the rain. I stood for awhile in shelter at the gate of Huntercombe, and saw the grey outline of Ashley Hill blotted by the sweeping storm. Who can say that romance is dead, when one can stand by such a place as Huntercombe, with its limes whispering in the rain, and see the distant hills? . . .

"I sped on in the rain, and sheltered again by Fellow's Pond, under a huge elm, watching the drops criss-cross in the dark and silent pool. What a romantic place! I have known it for thirty years—my first Sunday Boyle and I walked there, and I thought it beautiful even then. Every corner has a little sweet sunny memory of its own, and my heart aches rather at the thought of the good days gone. I used often to lie there on a rug in the hot summer afternoons and read. But I was always a little overshadowed by work, as a boy, and anxieties. I came

in, had tea, and worked again at proofs. I am not tired, but a little bored and stale with this hot weather—and with an odd desirous yearning of the heart to the very thing I have turned my back on all these years. One *ought* to be married, no doubt; but it is too late now—and I think I love my liberty better.

"Still reading Kipling. I think the *Gadsbys* an extraordinary document, so human, so unpleasing—the love-affairs of a cad! . . .

"The misery of my unoccupied existence is that I read and devour so fast. I can't meditate; I can't *rest* in the beauty I see so easily. I seem to note it, to say 'that is beautiful,' and then it is over. From my window I can see by the cemetery chapel spire a little blue hill, over soft woodland ridges, waiting, under the evening sky; unutterably peaceful and sweet. Nearer, it would all fall into fields and elms; but seen like this, it is just like a retrospect of one's own life.

"One pretty thing in the afternoon which I forgot to record was a silent battalion of cavalry, in khaki, who rode, for my pleasure, no doubt, over Dorney Common. First scouts; then the column, galloping on the turf with a fine clinking and clattering; and then a scout again, with a riderless horse; that looked like war. . . ."

In August he was in Scotland, staying with the Donaldsons at Humbie House, East Lothian.

"*Humbie, August* 30.—This was a noble day. Willy Leigh arrived at breakfast, looking very spick and span. We determined on Melrose. . . . Stuart, W.L. and I set off; we went right up on to Soutra Moor, such a fine wild place, with a great low dark mountain to the West. Then on and down, thridding these noble moorlands; lunching just above Glengelt, opposite a heathery corrie. We were soon at Lauder, a grim little town, but with a pleasing high, octagonal tower. Then through Earlston; but a south wind blew steadily and held us up. Then a great couchant mountain loomed up on the left; then we crossed the Tweed, such a noble river, on a

splendid bridge, a high viaduct, red and spindle-shanked, to the right. Then a great dark mountain came solemnly up—*Eildon*, the very name of which gives me a shiver. We were soon at Melrose, found Lady Alba and Miss Cochrane. The ruins are extraordinarily beautiful. I never saw more exquisite Gothic; and in a soft red stone, which mellows to lilac. The grass, harebells and ragwort, growing high on the arches, very delightful. Saw the grave of Michael Scott and other things which were dear to the childish mind; the cloisters, and a long walk between walls, bordered with annuals, very beautiful. I liked the look of Melrose, a largish town, like a Cathedral town. But I don't really like a *ruin ;* I always want to see it rebuilt. There is something dreary and melancholy, not pleasingly so, about the poor bones of a holy and beautiful house that distresses me. The great east window (which Scott calls an *oriel*) is very delicate.

" We had tea, and in consequence of my urgent desire drove off to Abbotsford. I forgot to mention a young cyclist, who lay reading a great book on a bank, gazing up from time to time, like a bird drinking, at a big mountain opposite him.

" The *scene* of Abbotsford very disappointing—tame hills, tame plantations, and the smoke and chimneys of Galashiels. There are a lot of horrible houses, manufacturers' villas, etc., on the bank opposite.

" The place was much bigger than I had supposed. It is let for the summer. . . . and the public are not allowed to see much. You go in by a side gate, among walls and hedges, through a square-walled garden of turf and yews; and then you are taken into five or six rooms only. But it was *vastly* interesting. One seemed to get near to Scott.

" The things I was most interested in were (1) the death-mask. A cap had been drawn over the hair; but it shows the domed forehead and the homely face—the lips fallen loose, the cheeks flaccid; (2) the big leather chair and desk where he worked, and the secret door by which he could steal down, early and late; (3) the

hideous, and yet adorable, orange Gothic glass, which shows how very imperfect his taste was.

"I was *not* interested in the collections—swords and purses and caps and odds and ends, mostly historical, and much like other swords and caps.

"But I did like to see the funny white tall-hat, of rough beaver, with a broad brim, which he wore, and the rough black, square-toed shoes; and the silk black-and-white waistcoat, like a footman's. That brought him near somehow.

"The Raeburn portrait I thought affected; but there was a pretty one of Mrs. Scott, and an evil one of Mary Queen of Scots' *head*, after execution; a bare red neck! Scott appeared to me here what he was; a great big jolly *child*—making a toy-house of Abbotsford, collecting old bric-à-brac, pretending to be everything but what he was, and enjoying *that* like a child; keeping up the silly mystification about the books, as though ashamed of it; '*Not caring a curse*,' as he said to Lockhart, '*about what he wrote*'; writing carelessly, cheerfully, without erasures or corrections (I am astonished at the *Lay*, which we have been reading aloud; at the great beauty of some of it and the incredible badness and thinness of much of it, the want of plan and finish and order, etc.); not a wise, tender craftsman, enamoured of beauty, dreaming of hopeless loveliness and the impossibility of expressing what is in the heart, but a rollicking teller of tales. I don't say the craftsman is nobler from the point of view of virtue—as a man Scott was a noble, generous fellow; but an artist ought to be more of a *priest*, I think, and live in mystery and wonder and remoteness, as Wordsworth did, and Rossetti, and many other worse men and yet greater artists than W.S. Scott went about planting and fishing and slapping people on the back and bawling them out of bed at six in the morning, and pretending not to write (I should have died of a visit to Abbotsford), and so he went on, a jolly boy to nearly the end; and after that a very good and gallant boy, suffering and working; but with a whole dim and beautiful world of which he was ignorant.

"As I write this in the dusk W. Leigh is playing a sweet low sad thing in the drawing-room below; and that strange waft of tenderness and yearning that such music in these dim half-lit hours brings, comes flowing over my spirit. I don't think I could have said *that* to Scott; I think he would have laughed and offered me his fly-book and a draught of ale!

"It is very pathetic to think of the old fellow at the end, broken down and dispirited, coining blood into gold, and all because he had been a fool about money. It was a sad chastisement *in kind*. He spent £120,000 on Abbotsford!

"I rather liked the absurd sham Gothic armouries and the hall and the big library—very rococo and trumpery, but the effect good. What I don't like is the way in which he despoiled Abbeys, and built the old niches in to his gimcrack palace. But it ends by being a stately house, all the same. And a spirit over it all, which is high and simple and beautiful. . . ."

"*September* 8.—The sad bare Berwickshire coast pleased me; but the engine poured a stream of steam like cotton-wool past the windows.

"It seemed that I was soon at York. I had two hours to wait. I went and prowled about and saw some pleasant houses and picturesque purlieus. The view of the Cathedral from beyond the Chapter House is noble. But the east view is horrible, it comes down on to a dirty pavement, and the design is weak. They have been clearing away old huddling houses from the neighbourhood of the Cathedral—a great mistake from the picturesque point of view. It began to rain, and after admiring the red and fretted front of St. William's College, I went within. The glass is noble; and the whole place is so rich and dim that it thrills one. I can't set down all my impressions. I was pleased to find my patron St. Christopher, in the nave. I was glad, too, to find an iron pierced screen, locked, that led into the venerable dark passage, of extraordinary stateliness, that leads to the Chapter House. It is this mystery that

enhances one's pleasure in such a place. I rambled to and fro—laughed at the Caroline Archbishops, sitting uneasily among cushions, holding Bibles, and pointing, with weeping cherubs, who look as if they had been soundly whipped. But I do like variety!

"I saw that Mr. Kempe had been to work. There he was in many postures, wrapped up in carpets and staggering under the weight of jewelled chalices in window after window, faint, handsome and affected. I sincerely liked poor old Peckett, in the South Transept, better. But why depict *Truth* as a glaring Turkish Bashaw? And the other figures in the infamously designed niches are all grimacing. I don't suppose they will survive. What fools people are in matters of taste! A mediæval angel was much more absurd in an eastern window of the transept, with a pinched and chilly face, and feathered trousers! Truly grotesque! Yet Mr. Kempe and Monty James would praise it.

"A verger took a party round, and talked so pleasantly and gently; I did not listen to much he said, but just crept about in the holy gloom, and felt the awe of the huge solemn place, so filled with tradition and splendour, creep into my mind. That feeling is worth ten thousand cicerones telling you what everything *is*. I don't want to know; indeed, I want *not* to know; it is enough that I am deeply moved. A foolish antiquarian was with the party, asking silly questions and contradicting everything. Such a goose, and so proud of being learned! The wealth and air of *use* pleased me. Yet the spirit which built it is all gone, I think.

"Religion—by which I mean services and dogmas—what is it? I sometimes think it is like tobacco, chewed by hungry men to stay the famished stomach. And perhaps the real food for which we starve is death.

"I had to go away before the service. Caught the 4.30. Lincoln looked very solemn and noble in a kind of grey haze, like Camelot. Then the dark began to fall, in a cold sunset. I was horribly bored before the end; wrote a hymn . . ."

Like his father before him, Arthur Benson was all his life a dreamer of vivid and fantastic dreams. Of the many that are recorded in the diary one or two have already been quoted, and here is now another.

"*Tremans, September* 11.—I had a long and very absurd dream. It was a trial, in which the defendants, or rather prisoners, were myself, a man whom I knew to be Lord Morton, and third, unknown to me. I could not discover what we were being tried for. It was before a mixed assembly, which I supposed to be the House of Lords; a judge in a wig presiding. It was just like Alice in Wonderland. By attentive listening I discovered it to be a case of conspiracy; and the only definite charge that was made was that in the presence of Arthur Heygate, who was a witness, someone had said that the only way to punish the Colonial Secretary for his political mistakes was by not asking him to dinner. To this I was supposed to have assented, though I had no sort of recollection of the incident.

"At the conclusion of the first morning Lord Morton was condemned to be executed. I saw it carried out. We went together to a place outside, where there was a flight of steps. He laid his head down, and a man with an axe cut pretty deep into his neck. I saw into the cut, it was like a currant tart. He then rose, and walked a few paces with me; but saying that he felt ill (no wonder) sat down, soon sank down and died.

"After this the trial, which had before been an amusement, became an anxiety to me. It continued, with all sorts of irrelevant speeches. 'I never will desert the Navy,' said one man at the conclusion of an impassioned speech. I beckoned a man in a wig to speak to me, and said to him, 'Can't someone make it clear that I know nothing about the case?' He said, 'Oh, it will be all right.'

"The Bishop of Winchester rose among others to speak, very affectedly, dressed in full robes, with many odd ornaments, leaning his hand upon Ed. Ryle's

shoulder. He said in the course of his speech, which I thought weak, that he had had his pocket picked on the previous day, and had lost a gold pencil-case, which had belonged to his father, and which he greatly valued. 'But far more,' he went on, 'did I feel the loss of an MS. which the pocket contained—one of dear Arthur Benson's letters.' This I thought to be in poor taste, but saw that it had produced a favourable impression. I was overshadowed all the time by an urgent fear of death, but speculating as to whether the sort of execution I had witnessed would *hurt*. I said to a lawyer who came up, 'I should not so much mind if I were dying in a good cause; but to be executed on a charge which I cannot comprehend, supported by incidents which I cannot recollect, seems almost grotesque.' He smiled, and said, 'Others have felt the same before you,' which I felt to be unfeeling. I was then called. . . ."

"*Eton, October* 25.—A most glorious autumn day; sun and freshness. These are the noblest days of the year. I worked very hard at the Castle—but had an odd letter from —— asking my 'intentions' about the headmastership. . . . I told him exactly how I stood. But it is borne in more and more upon me that it is no place for me. My delight in my present quiet life, with its sedate occupations; my intense sense of freedom in getting rid of the people, the talk, the scurrying to and fro; my deficiency of vague geniality, my dislike of occasions and formal appearances; all these seem to unfit me, or rather to subtract the zest which ought to be inseparable from good work. I could not, I think, give up my literary occupations.

"Then I am not large-minded enough. A headmaster ought to be partly like a brooding hen, sitting contentedly on her eggs or sheltering her chickens, with a tranquil and maternal love of life and company; and partly like a gallant fighting-cock, strutting fiercely about. I am neither; and the prospect, I find, is fading quite out of my view. . . .

"Then I rode alone by Maidenhead and Marlow—the Bisham woods very splendid, russet-brown and gold. . . . I rode fiercely home; got in at 5; and then wrote a little blood-curdling story for C. Hargreaves' new magazine. He had asked me cheerfully for a contribution—'about 2,000 words,' he said. These boys never realise that it could be a strain—I suppose that is a compliment. . . .

"I will not forget the exquisite sunset of to-day—such glowing, tender streaks of orange cloud, with a dim rich orange glow in the west, calling me with a far-off and gentle voice. I can't analyse the feeling that such a sight gives me. And yet it is generally accompanied with a sad reaching-out after a mystery—a feeling 'how beautiful it is, and how much it could do for me, if only'—and then one's weaknesses come streaming in."

"*November* 3.—Worked hard at the Castle—and I make progress; the end is in sight, that is of selection. In the afternoon I rode with the Vice-Provost.* We plunged, of course, into the headmastership question, and he accused me of being too nonchalant. I told him just what I felt; how far from insensible I was to the glories of the post, but was determined not to let that side weigh. He spoke very frankly, but nothing that he said altered my view. If they want me, I will go into the question. If they do not, I am quite content. He said that if it were clearly understood that I desired to try, it would probably put me ahead of the field. But I don't desire it. It ought not to be a question of sending in names. It should be treated like a bishopric. Fancy papa sending in his name for the archbishopric! When we had passed Wraysbury, after many wild directions from the V.P., I begged him to talk of *cooler* things; these other matters are too hot in the mouth. So we plunged into the life of Walter Scott, the Austrian War of '59, and other pleasant matters. Went up Priests' Hill, and through the Park; but the wide landscape was shrouded in faint mists, all vague, shadowy ridges, no light or

* F. W. Warre-Cornish, Vice-Provost of Eton from 1893, died in 1916.

colour. Met A.C.A. and Edward Horner, and they were so much disconcerted that I saw they had been talking of me. The Duke and Duchess of Sutherland to tea. He is a pleasant, courteous, rather uncouth, shy man—whom I like. The Duchess in her most Circean beauty; she told me that the pretty motto on her title-page was her own—and then talked of poetry—Yeats, etc.—with a good deal of discrimination. . . . The delightful Alastair, like a little robin, sate next me, and chirped in my ear. It was a pleasant party. . . ."

The Eton masters are represented on the Governing Body of the school by a member whom they elect. This post was now vacant, and it was by some suggested that Arthur Benson should stand for it. He was very willing to do so; but owing to the divergence of opinion in the matter of his educational policy he eventually decided to withdraw.

"*Eton, November* 6. . . . I see I must not set my heart upon this thing. I am obviously thought too strong a Liberal by many of my old colleagues. I expect that this great shuffle of posts, places and opportunities, will leave me just where I was, with just the added touch of ineffectiveness which hangs round an unsuccessful man. Well, I like solitude and books and simple life more and more. I would willingly give up all these pomps and vanities, if I could but do what I feel I *could* do, if I only could just get on to the right lines—write a *beautiful* book—which should help and satisfy people. I can express what I mean; and I have some real thoughts. But I can't quite find the medium.

"To chapel, fearing that the great swarm of old boys would make it unbearable—but there were fewer than usual. . . .

"The good Lloyd played the 'Ave Maria,' * to please me; and I again take this opportunity of saying that I

* By Henselt. Unfortunately his wish was not known in time for it to be played at his funeral.

should wish it to be played at my funeral. Also he had set down Parry in D minor for me—and with these and Turle's chants I was well entertained. A mission sermon, by a nice, simple man—*really good*—simple stories of Selwyn. I should like to have sharpened the points a little, and put in a few Stevensonian touches; but it was really fine. The appeal at the end was feeble.

"Walked with Hare to Sheep's Bridge; and then rather desolately back. I have been rolling before a full wind lately; and to-day it slackens; the sails drop. I feel to-day as if I were to be one of those people, with some gifts, but who are destined to effect nothing, to carry nothing through, by reason of some slack fibre in their souls.

"I put up a wild-duck in the river to-day, by Sixth Form Bench. It flew briskly away. That did me good.

"*Magna fides avium est: experiamur aves.*

". . . To-day I want to get away from Eton; to be at Cambridge, or better still at Tremans—to be out of this rather suspicious, rather gossipy, intriguing atmosphere. 'The isle is full of noises'; but they don't give delight, and they do hurt."

"*November* 12. . . . I now come back to Saturday. I sent my bag in a bus, and bicycled to Slough. Of course the bag didn't turn up, so I rushed in a cab to the inn-yard, where I found it just being shouldered by a leisurely boy. Saved it and caught train—saw Cornwallis and Harold Lubbock, going off for leave.

"Drove straight to Regent's Park; found Gosse hot and rosy, in his velvet coat, having walked to Welsh Harp—which ought to do him good—he is much too sedentary. But I wish he had waited till the afternoon, so that we might have walked together.

"Mrs. Gosse came in looking very kind, sturdy and rosy. While lunch was preparing, G. and I walked arm-in-arm up and down the little gravelled garden. He spoke to me very kindly and frankly—very anxious I should accept Eton if offered. . . . He says my energy

is restless and sub-divided, and wants one channel. But my channel is now literature, with a slight 'hem' of academical duties. (What a metaphor!) He did not like my 'Isles of Sunset'—thought it should have been written in verse; thought I was doing too much, and ought to be silent for a bit; praised the 'Rossetti,' and said it had made me a real position. I pointed out that I did my best, that my work was not hurried nor particularly slipshod; that one must follow one's bent in the fruitful years; that he wrote much more than I did. This was interrupted by unsuccessful attempts to catch Mopsy, the great black, surly cat. I don't think I converted him; but he said smiling, 'Perhaps it is only jealousy, after all'—and we went in to lunch.

"Lunch was profuse and delicate. Tessa was there, very frail. But I liked the look of Sylvia, who has taken up art, and works diligently. She looked healthy, bright-eyed, with a dancing light of zest about her. There was a big picture of hers in the room, of fir-trees and ferns and woodland—very carefully studied, but a little too pale in colour.

"We then—Gosse and I—sate about and talked all the long afternoon. Philip, very bright and cheerful, liking his work, came in for a little. But we mostly talked very easily and simply about literature and life. A good deal about Pater. . . .

"Gosse said, with much solemnity and serious feeling—a mood which one sees but rarely, and is then very moving—that the older he grew the more he felt that personality and individuality were *the* qualities in art; that nothing else mattered much. 'I may or may not agree with a man on questions of morals and art, but all I desire is to feel that it is a perfectly *sincere* point of view.'

"So we talked while the day darkened without. Then tea; and then, to my great surprise, which moved me a good deal, he accompanied me to St. Pancras; where, in the great big echoing station I met P. Lubbock. Gosse was most affectionate and paid me what is the best compliment of all—said my visit had comforted

and cheered him up. 'We care about the same things and in the same way,' he added—'we *must* continue to see something of each other *regularly*.' . . ."

"*Eton, December* 11.— . . . Then, against my custom, I crept to chapel. I hated Noble's Magnificat and its ugly ending. But 'Hear My Prayer' was delicious; though to-day it had no inner voice for me. And yet even now in this book, where I write so freely, I cannot say what I mostly thought about; vague reveries, tending one way.

"Then I sate while Lloyd played a Handel Concerto. The trampling of feet died away. The chink of coin (there was a collection) became fainter. The lights began to die out; and then Lloyd played absorbed, while the huge organ brayed and thundered above, or let fall musical showers of sound. . . .

"I find myself very full of work, very full of thought. But I think I am too discursive just now. I wish I could read more; I don't see many people, and I desire that less and less. . . .

"It was very strange to look down into the flaring chapel to-night, with its dark roof; the familiar smell; everything as it has always been; just so it looked thirty years ago when I sate as a Colleger in the seat just below. That life seemed so intense and absorbing then; the relations to other people so important and distracting. I wish—but what is the good of wishing?—I had had a more definite aim and principle. I was then like a reed in a stream, plucked this way and that by wind and water. I think I am not very different now; but I know my own mind more; and a dim ideal seems to shape itself. I wish that it led me to desire to rule this big place; but the burden is too great, the issues too enormous. How little I guessed, as I sate down there thirty years ago, staring at Hornby in his stall, that I might have even the chance of sitting in that stall myself!

"But this is a fruitless reverie, for I don't mean to sit there—even if I have a chance. And how much stranger it is to reflect that *if* I had supposed I might

have had a chance of sitting there, I should not desire to do so. It seemed so easy a thing to be a Headmaster then.

"And now I like my stall at Magdalene better. That little place, the tiny chapel, the little ivied court, draw me with a far tenderer longing."

The visit described in the following extract is referred to in the sketch of Charles Fairfax Murray, the well-known collector and connoisseur, included in *Memories and Friends* (1924). The gift of the "Spanish MS." was the first of Fairfax Murray's many and generous benefactions to the Fitzwilliam Museum at Cambridge.

"*December* 16. . . . I had had a bad night, full of wild dreams; went up to town horribly sleepy and tired, and drove to the Grange; found M. R. James* there already.

"Fairfax Murray had asked me if I knew anything of 'M. R. James, Director or late Director of the Fitzwilliam,' as he thought of offering them a Spanish MS. I replied that he was one of my oldest friends. F.M. thereupon asked me to arrange a meeting. So I did.

"He was showing M.R.J. the most splendid and sumptuous MSS., things which possess not the *faintest* interest for me. The colour of the miniatures is rather pleasing; but I would not give 2*s.* 6*d.* for the best MS. of the thirteenth century, except in order to sell it again.

"But he showed Monty about fifteen of these—and I saw he was in a generous mood. He suddenly said, 'I will send you *all* these if you like—and I want to give you all my autographs of Italian painters, and all the original MSS. of William Morris and Rossetti.' I suppose that the value of this gift is several thousand pounds. F.M. went on, 'I have a very great objection

* Dr. M. R. James, afterwards Provost of King's, and since 1918 Provost of Eton, was at this time Director of the Fitzwilliam Museum.

to the death duties; and there are certain things in my hands I don't want to get *sold*—so I propose to give away everything, except what may be sold.'

"This was rather splendid and simple—and he went on, 'Our friend here (me) will tell you that I want *no sort* of recognition. I *hope* it won't get into the Press—I would rather it were anonymous.' M.R.J. said with great tact, 'Well, we only desire to thank people in the way they like best.'

"The rest of the afternoon, with an interval for tea, was just wandering about among his wonderful things and looking. He carried a great branch-candlestick. He and M.R.J. got on the early printed books, which did not interest me; so I got a book called *Melusine*, with enchanting woodcuts, that gave me some ideas for stories.

"But here again the value of the afternoon was its atmosphere. To wander about in these great warm darkening rooms, with these splendid and beautiful things everywhere, did one good. He is a very delightful simple man, and I have a real affection for him. I can't quite make out his mind. I think he has the mind of a *collector* through and through; his reminiscences of people are all exact impressions, always with a certain quality (and he is a good raconteur, having a considerable dramatic gift); but they are quite without any proportion, and he will press quite unimportant details, apparently quite unaware they *are* unimportant. But his big head, frank eyes, and the simplicity, kindliness and childlike honesty of his talk make him an attractive fellow.

"I should like some of his portraits and pictures; but I want nothing else that he has got. I wonder what he would feel if he knew that I didn't care twopence for all his books, MSS., studies or engravings. But I like his fine stately house. It belonged to Richardson once, who wrote his books in the garden-house. But I don't care twopence about that either!

"I drove away with Monty—horribly yawny and stupid from so much standing and looking. He off to

Cambridge. . . . I slammed his finger in the hansom door, so he had no reason to bless me; but he had the best Spanish MS. to console him."

"*Tremans, December* 31.—Now let me say a few words about 1904, which has been indeed a blessed and happy year to me. I have had *lots* of little worries, but the great strain is gone—the tension that pulled at one's heart, like a dog tugging at its chain, and drew the blood away, whenever one allowed oneself to think of it. The thought of the old slavery, the fussy, fretting days—the running hither and thither, the scramble, the weariness, and what made it far worse, the *purposelessness* of so much; that was what knocked the bottom out of the Eton life for me. To feel that for nine-tenths of one's furiously busy hours one was teaching boys what they had better not learn, and what could do them no good; drumming in the letter, and leaving the spirit to take care of itself. It is *sickening* to reflect about.

"Well, all that is gone.

"I settled down at Ainger's in February last in great depression. I thought I could not endure to have no books, no papers of my own; no voice in asking guests or making arrangements; having to do for myself the hundred little details—buying stamps, shopping, etc., which I had left for years to my servants. But I soon picked it up; and the absence of all necessity for independence has turned out on the whole a great relief.

"Then I have been very happy in my work. I have come to enjoy writing more and more; I make the day centre upon it, and lay out the hours to guard the writing time.

"And then, too, I have made a real stride in art. I don't think I write better: the *Myrtle Bough** was as good as I could do now; but I seem to have become a citizen and a denizen of the City of Art—the City, whose

* A valedictory pamphlet, privately printed and circulated among his friends at Eton, 1903.

luminous and radiant towers I used only to see across the river and the plain. . . .

"It is not perhaps the central fortress of life that I have found; but it is one of life's fenced cities, and it is a great happiness to feel that one has arrived there—it is like being a Fellow of a College.

"And that takes me to my fellowship, which is a *great* happiness—though still a seed underground; yet a white tendril seems to be stealing upwards. I have a strange wistful love for Magdalene already. I long for her, with a kind of tender compassion. So small, so beautiful, so despised.

"Then, too, I have been very happy in seeing many of my old Eton friends in a serener and simpler way than formerly; and I have made some new friends, especially among the boys. But the whole year has a sort of aromatic fragrance for me—I don't know why—and this in spite of many little discomforts, and some really painful episodes. Indeed I seem to have been walking in the garden of the Lord in the cool of the day.

"Of course the question of the headmastership is a little overshadowing; but I have really not been overshadowed. When I begin to get anxious, I say to myself that after all, even if it were offered, I can't be *compelled* to take it. But if it *were* offered should I dare to refuse? Well, I have spoken out over this Greek question; and I daresay I have what a prudent man would call spoilt my chances. . . .

"In the afternoon I walked soberly and gladly round by the Sloop and Scaynes Hill. I don't know what I thought about. Such a sunset—I never saw anything more beautiful; a very fiery rim to the sky, so that it burnt between the trees like a furnace; then lemon-coloured, and pale rich green, like a green jewel; over all a huge cloud like a fish, its snout in the English Channel, its tail over London, of pearly laminated cloud, like scales—an amazing sight.

"I dipped down by the field-path as I came home, the path that crosses the stream and the line. I never saw such a sight. The hill rose steep above me, very dark;

a few silhouetted trees looked over; above, the glowing sky, and the great dark, fish-like cloud, swimming south. The valley of the stream not less beautiful; the mystery, the loveliness of it all, came like a tide, floated me, so to speak, off my feet, and away into a region of dim desire and hope; joy with anguish intermixed. I wonder what it all means—so real, and yet so far-off. . . ."

IV

1905

He was not offered the headmastership; and with the blithest of satisfaction and relief he heard the news, in the following March, of the appointment of Canon Edward Lyttelton, then Headmaster of Haileybury. That was the end of an unquiet time; for many of his friends had urged him to change his mind and present himself as a candidate; the Eton Governing Body, too, or at any rate several of its members, had approached and sounded him assiduously; and he on his side had been occupied unceasingly in declaring and expounding the manner of his unfitness for the post. Perhaps he was not the best judge of his unfitness, but of his unwillingness there could be no doubt at all; it was sincere and constant—and as much so as ever when the question was closed and the time for reconsideration was over. Then at last he felt safe, and he joyfully cast the long and harassing preoccupation from his mind. Now he could devote himself to Magdalene; and already he was fondly disposed towards his beautiful little college as never in all these years he had been towards Eton. There was a perplexing mixture in his feeling for his old school; he was one of Eton's untender sons, it must be owned, and now in his final liberation he grew no kinder.

It was a singular case. With all that he was still to accomplish I cannot doubt that the best and most original of the work of his life was done at Eton, and

especially in his house there; it was among the boys in his house, for those ten years, that all his talents, all his gifts of imagination and perception, were used to the full. To that degree they never were used elsewhere —certainly not in his writings, and not even, as I should say for various reasons, in his solid and valued achievement at Cambridge; nothing in all this ever seemed to be in the same way the work of the whole of himself, brought to a point. And yet, departing from Eton, he was able to break off his task in the middle, at the height of its prospering course, and not only never to miss it, but never to feel, apparently, that any real part of his life, any intimate share of his mind or heart, was left behind him in the school. He was, he remained, most unfilially detached in his bearing towards Eton; and his severity might be braved, but his absence, his obstinate refusal to set foot in the place for many years, was a harder cut, and one which Eton could not feel to be deserved.

So it befell, however, and for a long while he was seen there no more. He said that he felt that he had been badly used. But why?—but how? He was thankful to have escaped the headmastership, and his friends were at liberty to disagree with him on the "Greek question," and though argument had run high there was nothing but delight in his company and a welcome for his arrival, wherever he appeared. What then was the matter? He freely, much too freely, explained the matter, and himself, if nobody else, he had soon enlightened and persuaded; and by that time Eton was a complication and an embarrassment in his thought, and it was comfortable to put it out of sight. And so it went, much to the puzzlement of his friends, but not much, in truth, to the disturbance of his own good cheer; it was not a grievance that grieved him long. But still, if his friends of Eton desired to see him they must see him at Cambridge, on his new ground; and this they readily did, as often as possible, and there was no

break in any friendship of old times. He imposed his own conditions, as usual, and his days proceeded as before, agreeably and busily and sociably as ever, only with Eton exchanged for Cambridge and for Magdalene.

He took a set of rooms in college and spent the terms there, keeping the Old Granary for the vacation. His fellowship was honorary, but he was soon deep in the affairs of the college—giving a series of literary lectures, taking a set of pupils in essay-writing, and above all, with lively interest, with daily hospitality, making himself the friend of the undergraduates. Of his pleasure in Magdalene, of his pride in seeing her wax and flourish, of his sedulous and open-handed care for her beauty and honour, I will only say that the tale, now begun, was never interrupted until it was ended after twenty years by his death. Magdalene had the first claim on him henceforward, and except for two periods of illness, a shorter and a longer, he never missed a term in college. The rooms that he occupied at first were in the cloister court, on the ground floor of the Pepys building; and here—or in his house by the river in holiday-time—book after book was poured out in the course of this year, 1905, during the guarded hours between tea and dinner. *From a College Window*, *The Thread of Gold*, *Beside Still Waters*, *The Gate of Death*, the volume (for the English Men of Letters series again) on Walter Pater —all were the work of these teeming months; it was a record of fertility that even he, I think, never surpassed. Moreover the correspondence of Queen Victoria still occupied him constantly; the selection from the papers at the Castle was already complete, but the long editorial work was only beginning, and it had stretched out over the next two years before he saw the end.

The pages that follow will show how quickly he was established in his new circle; which indeed, with Donaldson as Master of Magdalene, with another friend of yet earlier schooldays, Dr. M. R. James,

about to become Provost of King's, with his youngest brother, Father Hugh Benson, at this time living in Cambridge, was a circle where he could soon feel at home. ("Donald" and "Lady Alba" at Magdalene, "Monty" at King's, will be recognised without further formality; they are always near at hand in the diary, during the Cambridge term.) Of many other friends and acquaintances, new and old, the names will often be heard before long. In King's, of course, and also in Trinity, he was on familiar ground from the first; but there was no college in which he was not soon a well-known guest. He enjoyed the society of Cambridge, and he entered into it with all his energy; and I may dare indeed to say that he brought to it, and to its high appreciation, a novel and genial and unprofessional air that might quicken the round of any academic concourse. To those who know Cambridge it is enough to say that he was at once elected a member of the "Family" dining-club; and those who do not may take it that the intimacy of the place in its most companionable mood, most traditional humour, was thrown open to him as soon as he appeared.

But first the question of Eton and the headmastership is to be disposed of—with a few pages, out of many in which the subject is talked out, from the diary of the earlier part of the year. There is no need to count the steps of the negotiations, debates, expostulations, that loaded the daily post between Eton and Magdalene; but it will be understood that as the crisis approached they were more and more frequent and urgent. The Provost of Eton, as chairman of the Governing Body, invited him to an interview; he answered that he did not think he could "form a ministry," and certainly would not compete. His old and attached friend, Cornish, the Vice-Provost, tried hard to move him, but in vain.

"*Magdalene, Ash Wednesday, March* 8.—A memorable day for me. Cornish writes to say that he deeply

regrets the turn events have taken; which means that my letter to the Provost is taken as final, and that I am released. For which relief I humbly thank God. Indeed my spirits have gone up with a bound, and I feel like a schoolboy. I do not for one instant regret my action, and I am quite sure I never shall regret it.

"What I feared, at the bottom of my heart, was that I should be *cornered;* that the Governing Body would offer me the post in such a way that it would have been cowardly and unpatriotic to refuse. I should have done it with fear and trembling, knowing it was not really my line. . . .

"Well, I am honestly very glad indeed; I feel like the man in the psalms, whose 'soul had escaped even as a bird, etc.' I feel as if I had recovered my liberty which had been menaced. Providence, I think, has brought me into this anxiety, in order to show me how dear and precious a thing Liberty is. *Libertate me involvo!*

"Is this a low, selfish, egotistical view? No, because I do honestly mistrust my strength, my patience, my capacity. I think it quite possible that I should have made a fiasco of it. I think that there is a *sad* lack of good candidates, and that this alone has forced me into prominence; but my true life is not there.

"Of course I feel that Eton is in rather a bad way, intellectually and morally. I should like to have helped it out. But could I have done it? And after all I gave nineteen years, my best of life, to the place.

"It is a beautiful bright cool spring morning. Two big pigeons have alighted in the grass just outside my window, seeking their meat from God.

"I went to the Commination service at 10—a very husky affair; three men, chaplain, Master, Lady Alba, me. The only thing that I carried away, except the sense of the splendour of the great rhetorical address, was the verse, 'thou shalt make me to understand wisdom secretly.'

"Now I sit writing, in great thankfulness and contentment. I had not realised what a burden these

anxieties had been till they were lifted from my mind, and I feel like Christian in the Pilgrim's Progress, when the burden fell off his back and rolled into a pit that lay in the bottom, *and he saw it no more*. . . .

"I lunched with Donald and Lady Alba alone; a pleasant talk about the College, etc.—then a walk with Donald to the top of Madingley Hill. Such a sweet day—cold and fresh, but with a real spring wind. . . .

"Came down to Coton. We talked out everything, Eton, the Provostship of King's, etc., etc. I was glad to find that my contentment only increased, now that these stately beckoning hands—'Come up hither!'—have withdrawn. I felt no shadow of envy, rather of compassion, for the man who should be called to Eton. It is a very strange position. . . .

"Well, I could, to use an Eton metaphor, *run in* at the head of a rouge, well pushed by strong men; but I can't drag the rouge with me, if they are reluctant and retrograde. . . ."

Whether the metaphor from the Eton field-game was really to the point; whether the "rouge," by which he meant his friends on the staff of the school, was indeed so reluctant; whether, if he had come forward and found himself at their head, he would not have been well pushed home into the goal: it skills not at this late day to inquire. But as for the "beckoning hands," it may be mentioned that another and to him a more alluring prospect had lately been opened for a moment and closed again. Augustus Austen Leigh, Provost of King's, had died in January of this year, and there had been talk of Arthur Benson as among his possible successors. Nothing came of that suggestion, but it had added in passing to the matter of thought with which these weeks were filled.

"*Magdalene, March* 9.—This morning spent in endless letters, etc. It is hopeless work—not a

line of my proofs. I am again being bombarded about Eton.

"I am going on quietly with my undergraduates at luncheon; and really I think it rather amuses me. If one could only take things quietly and simply, they would never be worse than tiresome—never agitating.

"I am a little bored by always having them; but now the instinct of the *collector* comes to my aid, the desire to *complete* the collection, to tick them all off! What feeble creatures we are; but we ought to use these primeval instincts more. . . .

"Then Monty and I walked to Grantchester, and *daffed* about many things. Then I contrived to write a passage about religion, which is very careful and sincere —but too outspoken? Then I dressed and went off to Trinity, to the Lodge. What a noble house it is—such dignity, amplitude and wealth of pictures and memorials. Mrs. Butler came and talked; then came the Master from chapel, very noble to look at, his pale, waxen face, his kind, tired eyes, his odd beard; in gown and scarf, cassock, decanal coat and silk stockings. We went into hall by an odd little staircase and came out on the daïs. He and Aldis Wright read grace, somewhat marred by a crash of falling trays. . . .

"The Master talked suavely, interestingly, continuously. . . . It is difficult to retain any impression of the stream of his talk. It is remarkable for its range, its knowledge of people, its finish, its blandness. He has an exaggerated idea of academical success, I think. . . . Then we stalked out together, very fine; the Master and I leading the way. Another little thing he said amused me. 'Do you know,' he said, 'Percy Thornton's *very* inferior book—dear Percy Thornton!—a dear, a very dear and intimate friend of mine.' In the combination room he spoke very feelingly of his mistakes as a headmaster, principally of severity—his eyes filled with tears. . . . He is a very beautiful and striking figure, a gracious personality. I felt that I was with a great man, and a man of condescending greatness.

"Then we went to the Lodge, where he showed us the big judge's bedroom—on the ground floor, full of interesting pictures of judges. Then in the drawing-room a miniature of Byron (*not* very good). Then many other pictures: holding a candle aloft with a tremulous hand with white pointed fingers: Mrs. Butler and a shy red-faced girl with a great mop of hair—I never heard her name.

"Then I went to Henry Jackson; a parliament of smokers. A most dismal business. The great man stood, like a comic mask in a wig, and read in a book, which he sometimes showed his neighbour with a screeching laugh. Ugly and perspiring men, faint with conviviality, stood about. Then I drifted up to Lapsley who paid me compliments—and then went off, after a talk with Cunningham, to Lapsley's rooms, where I found the old set, Barnes, Laurence, Foakes-Jackson, with whom I have somehow got included, though they are not at all my sort. How odd these juxtapositions are! Before I knew what I was doing, I was enrolled in a dining-club, to have free religious discussion. Good God!—as if that did any good!

"Then, finding it 12.15, I fled howling, with Foakes-Jackson, whose little feet, after he left me, I heard pattering down the stony passage by the Round Church. He said that he dreaded to interview the porter. . . . I enjoyed the evening very much, and ate and drank so moderately that I had a singular lightness of mind."

Of the well-known figures that peopled that evening at Trinity, death has since then taken away the bland and gracious Master, Dr. H. M. Butler—William Aldis Wright, the Vice-Master, sturdy and laconic—and Henry Jackson, with his humorous eye and his Socratic mask. Nor could the new dining-club, thus inaugurated, now be assembled in Cambridge, since Dr. Foakes-Jackson of Jesus migrated to New York and Dr. E. W. Barnes to the Temple and to Birmingham. They, with the two members who still remain

in the courts of Trinity, Mr. R. V. Laurence and Mr. G. T. Lapsley, though they appeared to Arthur Benson "not at all his sort," must quickly have been found to be very much of his sort indeed; for they were among his closest friends in Cambridge for all the years that ensued.

Another familiar and memorable Cambridge face, now vanished, is to be seen in the following extract—the roseate jovial petulant face of the Registrary, and the general friend, of the University, J. W. Clark.

"*April* 1.—I plunged early into the fray and wrote about thirty letters to all concerned—mostly short notes just to say what I was doing. The only long letter to Anson. . . .

"I must say that, *as an omen*, I had a good encounter. As I came out of my house, having packed off all my letters, I met J. W. Clark, very red in the face and sleepy-looking, but with the old nice smile. He said to me, 'I suppose I shall soon have to congratulate you on new honours.' I said, 'No, I have just refused to have anything to do with it.' 'Then I congratulate you with all my heart,' he said. 'You are a man of letters and not an administrator—don't forget that. . . .'

"Well, the spirit in which a man takes up a post heavily, nervously, anxiously, in a spirit of shuddering and sacrifice, hating all the machinery, etc., is not the proper spirit. I could make a sudden great sacrifice, I believe; but the daily self-immolation? I could make it perhaps; but all the qualities in me that are worth anything only grow in the sunshine. I am not one of the people who are effective when they are depressed; I am only really any good when I am blessedly content. I *know* this—and this is why I have felt disqualified.

"If all the staff had been with me, set on the same objects as myself, ready to make concessions and compromises, and valuing the principle above the detail; if the Governing Body had *summoned* me cogently and

constrainingly, I would have gone, not gladly, but willingly. But with a G.B. who don't know their own mind, and with a staff who distrust me, and with a hopeless dislike of the whole business of administration, how *could* I go? My work is meant to be done in a corner.

"I have no doubts *really* about this; and such as I had seem to melt out of my mind like clouds on a bright summer morning.

"Just a little soreness remains—'these are the wounds with which I have been wounded in the house of my friends.' I was anxious to help on the G.B.—I was *prepared* to help now; but they won't have me.

"But I don't want to make myself out *both* as happy in my refusal *and* pathetic. I *am* happy, unreasonably and absurdly happy. I feel, as I think I said, like a mouse who hears the trap snap just behind him. The pathos lies further away, the pathos of being somehow, in spite of certain gifts and powers, a failure; just not effective. It is the secret core of weakness, selfishness, softness in me coming out. But after all, it is He that hath made me. And one fine and beautiful lesson I have lately learnt, and that is the hollowness of personal ambition.

"I feel as if I should like never to see Eton again, except in dreams. I gave her my money's worth, I think; but I could not *go up higher*."

His holiday inn this Easter was the King's Arms, Dorchester—again with Tatham.

"*Dorchester, April* 18.—A mass of letters—but we went off early by train. Corfe Castle, sitting on a lonely hill, between two black downs, with a misty valley behind, looked astonishingly romantic and dim. I liked Poole harbour; but there was an old boring talking man in the carriage. . . .

"We were at Wimborne by 11.0. The Minster interesting, but rather disappointing. It has a central Norman tower and a western one. But it is a low church,

and the brown stone with which it is restored is ugly. The town very uninteresting. Found service going on and sate it out. Three clergy, and about 30 women! It seemed very false and weak and sentimental. One old parson read aloud in a feeble voice from the choir steps a very intimate and strained meditation (by Thomas à Kempis?)—the sort of thing one might read, in a morbid mood, in one's bedroom, but not fit to be publicly recited. Then came a hymn; the women squeaked feebly, but a fine strong bass sang with much feeling—one of the clergy. Then the ante-communion, long Gospel. The whole thing seemed to me dilettante and silly. One felt that the clergy had no business to be sitting there dressed up, feebly wishing things were otherwise, and bending in prayer, I daresay quite sincerely. It seemed unmanly, antiquarian. They ought to have been trying to *mend* the world, if they felt like that, not engaged in sleepy mooning orisons. I felt a hatred of all priestly persons, eating the bread of superstition and sentiment. I am full of sentiment myself, but it ought not to be organised.

"Then, with two silly women, we were taken all round by an intolerable, stupid, deaf, vain old clerk, who could not understand one's questions, and repeated his lesson. . . . He said that there was an enlarged photo of himself in the town, in robes. 'I am known to thousands of people,' he said. Horrid old wretch!

"I remembered that it was here that Cornish wooed and won Mrs. C. I liked to remember that. . . .

"Then we found in a little village called *Anderson* a simply enchanting manor-house with a big farmyard attached. A house of brick, with gables and oriels, in a wild garden, with a stream running through big laurels. How I should like to live there! A little church close by. Here we lunched, with a friendly spaniel who shared our sandwiches. A big black dog made demonstrations of displeasure; but the peace of the whole place, in this quiet green valley, among water-meadows, the old gables of the manor above the trees!

It is to be sold next week. One could live there very happily, I think. But *coelum non animum*. . . .

"Then we rode on, but took different turns and missed; but rejoined again at a big pine-clad hill-top. Then by Kingston, a house like Addington in a green park; and into Dorchester by the water-meadows, giving a fine view of the town. Another quite delightful day, full of the sweetest impressions of this beloved earth.

"A lot more letters. A *fine* letter, full of sense and courage from Herbert Winton*, approving my decision. An interesting letter about books from E. Horner, a moan or two from the Vice-Provost. A sensible letter from the Master of Peterhouse about Le Bas prize—from Lady St. Germans, President of Magdalen, Willie Strutt, North S. Hamilton, and others—a very interesting batch. I sate down at once and wrote fifty, or to be accurate, 25; and did not dislike it. Then a peaceful dinner; and letters and diary."

"*Magdalene*, *May* 5.—I dabbled about with letters all morning. Young paid me a long visit, and we talked Eton out; but I protest before heaven I will not speak more of it unless I am obliged. He was very affectionate and blithe. . . .

"Then I got a bike out. I had slept indifferently and was a little heavy. But the day was simply enchanting—a cool north wind, the air exquisitely clean and clear. . . . There is a wold, perhaps sixty feet high, above Swaffham; and Swaffham is just on the edge of the huge fen that stretches to Ely and Soham, and of which one bit, Wicken, is still (undrained) fen. Well, by the mill up there the view was gigantic and glorious: the long, pure lines of fen and dykes from verge to verge: and on the edge was Ely, in a dim, blue majesty, the sun shining on the leads as FitzGerald saw it from Newmarket heath sixty years ago! . . .

* Dr. Herbert Ryle, then Bishop of Winchester, afterwards Dean of Westminster till his death in 1925.

"Then I rode back; and by the Devil's Dyke a cuckoo flew beside me, moving his grey, shimmering wings slowly, and when he perched manœuvring his ribbed tail. He seemed loath to leave me. I wonder what gift he will bring, false and pretty bird? Do I, like him, want others to hatch my eggs, content with flute-like notes of pleasure?

"I wrote a passage on returning: dined in hall. . . .

"Then H.W. paid me a call: a nice boy, full of anxiety and good feeling: in the midst of *Sturm und Drang*, finding what he calls his "dearest convictions" failing him: very pathetic in one way, and rather sadly amusing in the other. His admiration of and confidence in my literary powers and oracularity of speech rather embarrassing. We had a long mixed vague talk; but I knocked a few nails in, I think. I cannot help feeling that if this boy finds the art of expression he may be a good writer; at least he seems to me to have ten times the *fire* I ever possessed. When I realise the intense vehemence and impulsiveness of a boy like this, his "exultations, agonies," I feel what a very *mild* person I was; I fell into depression as a young man, but even that I bore with angelic meekness; I never had the least vestige of a *kick* in me!

"He discoursed of the dons at Emmanuel, and opened my eyes somewhat to the light in which we harmless persons are regarded. If a don is crusty and silent he is held to be arrogant; if he talks he is a bore. What the devil then *is* he to do? My young friend smiled: 'Oh, it is in the nature of things,' he said."

"H.W." was at this time an undergraduate at Emmanuel; and it may be allowable to mention that he has since gone so far in fulfilment of his friend's prediction as to write the novels of Mr. Hugh Walpole.

"*Monday. May* 8.—A letter from Edward Lyttelton summoned me to town: I went up, after writing many letters. Found Shipley* going up to the Grouse Disease

* Sir A. E. Shipley, F.R.S., Master of Christ's since 1910.

Commission. He is amused to find that it is almost entirely in the hands of crack shots, responsible for the death of many more grouse than even the disease itself. It is a humorous idea, people trying to stamp out the disease that they may have the fun of killing the grouse themselves.

"I drove to the House of Lords. I found Gosse in the library, and had a pleasant talk. . . .

"Then I went to National Club. Found Edward, brown as a berry, full of tranquillity, good spirits and confidence. He unfolded to me his schemes. . . .

"I thought that this interview might have tried my philosophy and fortitude; that I might find myself wishing myself in his place, with a free hand to carry out ideas. But I did not for a single instant. Indeed it was very much the other way. Again and again I said to myself, 'Can it be that I don't really wish to have the carrying out of these things, and to hold this great position?' And not the slightest echo of desire or envy or chagrin came back. That is worth something, I think: worth the long and wearing anxiety of the candidature.

"We sate and walked up and down in the little garden at the back of the National Club; it was sunny, and a fresh wind blew and stirred the bushes, which were all green. I liked Edward's candid gaze, the smile which broke out all over his face, his splendid laugh. He is a mere brown skeleton; but his hands still red and stumpy as of old. I felt an odd mixture of confidence in his strength, and entire mistrust in his judgment. We finished our talk looking over the little wall above the embankment. Sir A. Bateman passed and regarded us with grave surprise. Then Edward biked off to a doctor in Harley Street, about his throat; and I back to King's Cross; and through a sunny calm evening to Cambridge, revolving schemes for Eton, and heartily glad that the burden was not on my back. . . ."

"*May* 15.—I seem never to have a moment to write in this book now. I am really as much (or more) hustled

as I was in old days at Eton. I struggled desperately with letters; but had to go off at 11.15 to Pembroke Lodge to see the Bishop of St. Andrew's* by appointment. I found him at the door, pacing about in the sun: looking very tired; but with just the kind and wistful look of old; the only sign of age a certain heaviness and slowness. I took him to the Granary and he asked me about everyone and everything, looking very long at E.W.B.'s pictures, especially at the Vanity Fair, which he liked. Then to Magdalene; where he asked me about myself and my soul, and spoke very beautifully and simply, like a wise and tired child, half on the verge of tears, of walking in the Will of God, holding to His hand. Then I took him to the chapel; and he knelt down on the step in front of the altar and motioned me to kneel by him. He prayed *very* tenderly and wistfully about me and my dear ones, alive and dead, himself, my work and his. And then he rose and with great dignity and simplicity laid his hands on my head and blessed me, with a beautiful form of words of which the music remains with me, though I cannot remember the words themselves—to be guided, led, helped, comforted. I drew very near to him in that moment; and I felt, too, a strange solemnity, a consecration about it, coming just at the time when I have refused and missed great opportunities; perhaps it was a kind of consecration of my life to Magdalene—who knows?—and yet I do not feel as if Magdalene was to be my home for long. But anyhow, it was just the peaceful patriarchal blessing I wanted and needed. . . .

"And so we walked out in the sun and I tried to thank him, but could not; and he got into the cab and drove away with a smile and a wave of the hand, carrying my love with him. His pale face, the dark circles under the closed eyes, the wistful, smiling, tearful lips, the black hair, will long live with me. . . . Of course I am not in line with him in the superficial tones of belief; but I am with him below

* Dr. G. H. Wilkinson, formerly Bishop of Truro, died in 1907. A sketch of him by A.C.B. is included in *The Leaves of the Tree* (1911).

and within, though we don't call things by the same names. . . .

"Then I rode off alone, Monty having thrown me over; and again I had one of the most curiously beautiful rides of my life. I got to Milton: saw the church, in its green shade, with its elaborately written monuments, its glorious little window of Jacob, with hands like parsnips: then crossed the line, among the green pastures, so full of great thorn-thickets: and then along the tow-path, riding slowly down the Cam. Such a sweet clear, fresh day. I wound slowly along past Baitsbite and the Waterbeach bridge, into the heart of the fen. The space below the tow-path full of masses of cow-parsley: the river sapphire blue between the green banks—the huge fields running for miles to the right, with the long lines of dyke and lode; far away the blue tower of Ely, the brown roofs of Reach, and the low wolds of Newmarket. It was simply *enchanting!* Such a sense of peace, and happy loneliness, and space and silence. I found a trench full for a mile of the sweet water-violet; pale lilac flowers, with a heavenly scent, on green slim stalks; leaves like hair: this flower an old friend of mine from Eton days. So I wound on and on, full of peace and content; I declare that the *absolutely* flat country, golden with buttercups, and the blue tree-clumps far away backed by hills, and over all the vast sky-perspective, is the most beautiful thing *of all.*

"I got to Upware; was ferried across in an old boat; spun before the wind to Cambridge. Then Monty came in to tea, very solemn and well-dressed, blue suit and black tie; the *Provost!* How strange it all seems, and yet how natural; that mouth-filling word, with such dim and awful associations. . . . We talked away, and he told me how he was sent for after the first scrutiny and asked if he would accept. There was a green table set out by the choir door inside, and fellows in nearly all the stalls. He accepted, and they filed out shaking hands. He told me too how the choir-boys asked to see him, and did him a simple homage in their vestry. Very nice!

"Then Hall with Jones; and a Concert Committee in Sawday's rooms. S. seems resourceful and energetic; then a little work; but I was tired."

He is next seen at Tremans, where "Hugh" is of course his younger brother, Father Benson, and "Beth" the much-loved nurse of the family, now frail and aged, but still incessantly active in her care of all her children.

"*Tremans, June* 2.—It is very sweet to be here, though a hot soft wind this morning roars in the pines, and the laburnums are all dishevelled. I wrote, read, talked all morning. I can't find courage to attack the Q.V. bundle.

"Then walked with Hugh, in sweet woods and lanes; down by the lake, by Danehurst; and back by the green lane that comes out by Townplace and Freshfield. He is a strange nature. He is entirely unworldly; hates cruelty, rudeness, lack of consideration above everything. Yet he is himself in a way very inconsiderate. Table and ledge, all over this house, are heaped with books he has torn out of shelves and thrown down. The litter in the little smoking-room is fearful. Last night he would not leave dear Beth in peace till she had found him a box, and she trotted about far more than was good for her. He has a great charm; though I often feel that in my absence he thinks little of me. He has, indeed, all the charm, the *bonhomie*, the attractiveness, the hardness of the artistic nature.

"I wrote away about Pater and Cuckoos. Then found M. at dinner, looking well and strong. We rather lapsed into vague scrappiness about the Mission, etc. Then I read a little paper which aroused some discussion. Then prayers, cutting short the thread, with a hymn which I can only call damnable; bearing the same relation to poetry and music that onions and toasted cheese do to claret and peaches; strong, coarsely flavoured, ugly, untrue *nonsense*. It is odd to me that the dear ladies who are so refinedly critical in

other regions don't see that this is vulgar. I don't myself believe that vulgarity is a sin at all, but I happen to dislike it; and in this short life, that is enough. . . ."

" *Saturday, June* 3.—They are celebrating the Fourth of June at Eton, and thank God I am not there in any capacity whatever.

" I wrote letters all the morning. . . . Then I took a bicycle and rode by Chailey and Plumpton, on to Wivelsfield, and back by Hayward's Heath. It was a perfect day; and this great undulating plain, full of oak-woods, with the pure austere line of the downs, so dark and dusky, coming out at every turn over the bright and fretted green of the uncrumpling oak leaves, was a perpetual joy. The view from North Common is one of the most beautiful in England, I think. I pondered many things, not unhappily, though my thoughts had a melancholy tinge to-day. Life races past so swiftly; there is so much to see, to enjoy, to feel; such endless beauty, so many dear and interesting relations with others to experience. I feel like a man at a huge banquet, lamenting his slender appetite.

" The white heads of daisies, floating on the top of deep meadow grass, affected me tyrannously.

" I felt as if I could have ridden for ever in that quiet joy, feasting my eyes and heart on quiet beauty and grace, until the evening. Yes, and what then?

" Since then I have written a little at Pater, and my book, really finishing the latter, I think. The proofs arrive. Every now and then a gun is fired in a field near; a fierce twitter of sparrows and starlings rises in the ivy, and the peacock blows his harsh trumpet. . . .

" The evening falls slowly; a warm air steals in. The laburnums hang heavily, and the birds sing faintly. All is breathlessly still. Dear old Beth comes trotting up with a rose which she has tied for me. Well, I have had another very happy day, and am grateful."

It is impossible to consider the life of Cambridge twenty years ago without soon encountering the sub-

stantial and ubiquitous figure that next appears. Arthur Benson long afterwards made a more finished portrait of Oscar Browning—it is to be found in *Memories and Friends*, of 1924—and the same struggle of distaste and admiration, both alike reluctant, is seen in this page of the diary.

"*The Old Granary, June* 12.—Having next to no letters and no paper I began work immediately after breakfast on the Q.V. letters, and did a great batch. But it is too hot for comfort. . . .

"After lunch I went off in a calm and leisurely spirit on a bicycle. It was a peculiar pleasure to get out of Cambridge, which was crammed with Whit-Monday folk, as well as the bevies of sisters and friends, led about by excited undergraduates. I don't at all wish to depreciate this background. It is rather pleasant when one is living independent and secure, to feel this gaiety going on, which would be unendurable if one had to take part in it. I rather like the perpetual swish of waves beneath my window, the creaking of oars, the cheerful chatter of irresponsible persons; it sets the slow melody of my own thoughts to a cheerful descant. . . .

"I saw a goldfinch, and a large finch unknown to me, I imagine a hawfinch. Then on by Babraham, over the Gogs, with a splendid view, richly coloured and tranquil; and so home, a good ride and very happy.

"Tea. Then wrote a fantasy for my *House of Neville* book. Then O.B. came to dinner. This was a severe trial. But I got an odd, pathetic interest out of it. He talked for two hours without a moment's cessation of his influence, the ambitions he had had, his services to education, his services to King's, the malignity and jealousy of everyone in the world. He said that his habitual feeling here was that of a whipped hound, that everyone was in a conspiracy to belittle and insult him. And yet it was all full of fine flashes of insight, of purpose, of wisdom. . . . He indulged in many acute characterisations of people. He described his farewell to Uncle Henry, which he said was very affecting. It

appears that O.B. talked, according to his own confession, entirely about himself, in the same vein; his ambitions, his services, his disappointments. It never enters the man's head that he is in the *least* to blame; I won't say it makes me miserable, for there is a lurid interest about it all; but it is really the saddest thing; because the man is a genius, and because he *has* done a great work, in his odd, selfish way; but he is all coated and scaled with egotism, and covered with prickles. He had brought a lot of documents with him, and the evening ended by his reading to me in his fat utterance the testimonials he had received when he stood for a Professorship at Glasgow. He never said a word about anyone except to malign them; he never asked for an opinion; he did not attend to anything that I said, and interrupted me again and again. The only remarks which he listened to were those that were couched in flattering terms. The effect is indescribable. I felt, when he waddled off, as if I had been turned over and over in somewhat ill-smelling waves; and yet I couldn't help realising his force, his brilliancy and his genius. He set me thinking somehow; and gave one an inspiration to try and keep up an intellectual standard. He made one ill jest about —— and his wife, which is really incomparably humorous, but rather too broad to reproduce. *Je m'y perds!* The strangeness of the creation of such a man, so fine, so gross, so public-spirited, so mean, so intellectual, so dull, so great, so little, is a perfect mystery. The tares and the wheat grow together in rich luxuriance, inextricably intertwined. His ruling passion seemed to be to make King's a great college, and to make all the money and credit out of it that he could. He has done a great work and covered himself with discredit, and deserved discredit. He has created a school here, and he is detested. He has fought the battle of intellectual things, and he is a holy terror. He is a genius and a bore, a man of light and darkness; Hyperion and a satyr, Jekyll and Hyde. I cannot defend him and yet I admire him; I cannot respect him and yet I like him; I pity him with

all my heart, and yet the one thing he does not desire is pity. He is half baker and half devil; and the odd thing is that he is not now one, now another, but both at once. There is no theory of God which will explain the existence of a man like O.B. And the result of my talk has been that the mystery of the Universe presses fiercely on my mind."

In all these years, and until the end, Arthur Benson often went to stay with his cousin, Mrs. Stephen Marshall, at Skelwithfold, near Ambleside, and it is there that he is next seen. It will be remembered that the "little Monarch," as Duke of Albany, had been a boy in his house at Eton.

"*Skelwithfold, July* 20.—I wrote a long letter to the Duke of Saxe-Coburg, congratulating him on his accession, and bidding him rule well. Odd to find oneself advising a little Monarch how to rule. I do wish him well with all my heart. . . .

"A cloudy morning, rather close and grey. . . . The afternoon was *most* interesting. We drove through Ambleside, and I recognised the house where the pert girl was in 1870—it was just below Belle Vue, and belonged to a cousin of Wordsworth's—now a training college.

"We went to Fox Howe. This place was built and planted by Arnold, just sixty years ago; yet it has all the look of an old, settled, peaceful place. It is odd that the time required is *just* too long for a man to enjoy it himself. If he built at forty, and few people can do it before, he would *begin* to have it right at eighty. The house is bigger and more stately than I had thought; in the semi-ecclesiastical taste of the 'forties. The garden beautiful—it is embowered in tall trees and lawns—one with the oddest curved flower-bed I have ever seen; all this planned by Wordsworth. From the windows you see green water-meadows, leafy hillsides, may-trees, and great green mountains; but it is rather a hothouse; and the ceaseless cries of trippers in their char-à-bancs on

the road hard by are horrible. Miss Arnold received us—a dear old lady—rich complexion, big smiling mouth, full of teeth, long nose, rippled hair, slight cast of eye; but with such a sweet, courteous manner, so that one hangs on the simplest words that come from her lips as seeming to have a flavour and a quality denied to others. We talked of her relations and mine—I wish I had a beautiful, dignified, courteous manner! It comes from those qualities in the mind, joined with a certain timbre of voice and distinctness of utterance. . . . We walked about the garden a little; and then drove away; I valued this sight of an interesting house and a gracious lady very deeply.

"Then we drove on to Rydal Mount; and were fortunate again—Mrs. Fisher-Wordsworth at home; we passed by the way houses inhabited by all sorts of familiar names, Quillinan, Rawnsley, Wordsworth. Rydal Mount is invisible from the lower road. You walk up past the church. It is a very tiny place—like a farm-house—but the gardens with trees and terraces, and the odd Mount of Meeting, which gives its name to the place, are all impressive. I remembered seeing it in '70—the slate steps leading up to the front of the house, through rhododendrons, recalled it. Papa gave me a Wordsworth, bought at Lincoln Station, in honour of the visit.

"The rooms tiny—and a *fearful* smell of dry-rot—but deeply moving and interesting. Portraits and busts everywhere—such as Haydon's. But it must have looked very different in the Poet's time—much newer, much more *raw;* he was making the garden then, and adding to the house—and of course *much* simpler in furniture, etc. The garden struck me greatly—the view of Windermere, the beautiful fall of the ground, the trees, the almost tropical luxuriance of everything. I felt a good deal of emotion about the whole thing—much more than at Fox Howe. The stiff, self-absorbed, common-place-looking man (Wordsworth, I mean) was, after all, a high priest of mysteries—and the house stands for much high and beautiful *joy*. He lived here thirty-five years.

"They are terribly harried by trippers. But Mrs. F.W., rather a pretty woman, showed us everything, the chests, the little old parlour, etc., with great zest. I wish I could copy the dignity of Wordsworth, in refusing to do *anything* but what he loved. I will aim at that.

"The lines of Milton kept running in my head as we walked about, with a deep thrill:

> On this mount he appeared; under this tree
> Stood visible; among these pines his voice
> I heard; here with him at this fountain talked.
> P.L., xi, 320.

The two places together filled me with interest. Schoolmastering and poetry! To see the abodes of two of the prophets, masters in these two arts, both of which I have practised, and in both of which I have meekly and humbly failed, was a kind of humiliating inspiration. After this I decided to walk over the Fell. Not a breath stirring, and a close, unutterable heat. I went slowly up among the ferns, dripping, buzzed about by flies; but with fine backward glances at Nab Scar and the dark lake below. As I rose, the great mountains rose to look at me, behind the nearer hills. . . ."

"*Tremans*, *August* 16.—I read Wm. Johnson's journal in bed—his views of chivalry, etc.—and felt truly ashamed of my paltry, weak, trivial, sentimental, ignorant mind. I know nothing, am miserably biased—but it is of no use bemoaning it; I remember what interests me. I expect I read as many books as he did! It is like music; no amount of *study* of it reveals the inner soul, the appreciation which a child may have, to the unmusical. W.J. writes in one of his letters respectfully, yet incredulously, about music to A. Coleridge. *Melodies* affected W.J.—he tied on to them something of the romance and melancholy of the world; but he didn't really believe that a change of key could affect people as they said it did. Yet even to me, with my paltry musical gift, a change of key is like magic.

"Well, one must go on and do the best one can with one's powers. . . . I lunched off cold fragments—very nice. Took a train to Hayward's Heath, and then by Burgess Hill right out to the west. . . . I found at last such a pretty out-of-the-world place, Twineham, with a little brick Jacobean church, at the end of a lane—small, dark and comfortable; an old Italian picture (a bad copy, I expect), of a holy family, which might have some appeal to imagination, poked away over the chancel arch, without misgivings, in order to make room for Mr. Kempe at his worst. A sly, ferret-faced angel, incredibly involved in raiment, as though the celestial temperature were arctic, making his announcement to a Virgin, who looks as if she were being photographed, very demure. The colours inoffensive, but a poor work of art.

"From the pretty little lonely churchyard, over a wheatfield, the outline of the down rose and fell, like a green and shadowy wave. A school feast at the vicarage. I read epitaphs, and sate long on the broad, low slab of a grave, wondering who and what my host, that lay below, had been. It was very sweet in that little secluded churchyard, and for once I had no sense of hurry. Twineham Place, an old farm-house, held up its timbered gables and rusty chimneys very pleasantly over a grove of oaks. . . .

"What an odd thing one's mind is. I have no great desire to be loved by other people; yet I should like to think that in the days to come, when I am gone, someone should care to retrace my rambles, and even wish me back. . . ."

"*August* 17.—Letters and business all morning. I forgot to say that on my return yesterday I visited Cuckfield church, which is rich and dim, like a cathedral, full of villainous, yet joyful, glass. It has an incomparable view from the churchyard; yet I suppose that man can't live on views alone.

"I spent rather a feeble morning; a hot, damp south-west wind was blowing, and the mind was unstrung. I

went out bicycling, and worked down against the wind to Burgess Hill, returning to Wivelsfield, and I saw many beautiful vignettes; a deserted byre, with a big stone-tiled barn, doors open, and a water-wagtail, with head on one side, looked curiously in to the raftered dark; a little timbered, ancient house, the front walls all scored with pale half-circles, where the roses swung to and fro; a deep, silent lane, overhung with close hazels, up which I went in gratified silence. . . . It has been a happy day, at least a contented one, in spite of a few sombre shadows which lie in the background of the mind, like big clouds, and from which a few scattered rain-drops seem at times to fall.

"What odd tricks the mind plays. At Stanmore I saw in the church the grave of some good woman, who died on August 17, aged forty-three. I was seized with a mild presentiment that August 17 would bring me some fateful crisis. But it has passed without event, and I am still here, though yesterday the thought was about me all day, not sadly, but with a grave solemnity.

"I reflect that since I have left Eton, in addition to all my work on the Queen's Letters, I have written the following books:

1. *Cambridge Revisited* (not published).
2. *FitzGerald* (62,000 words).
3. *Upton Letters* (80,000).
4. *College Window* (40,000).
5. *Pater* (60,000).
6. *Leonard** (60,000).
7. My poetry lectures—quite a book (50,000).
8. *The Thread of Gold* (80,000).
9. Enough essays and articles to form a small volume by themselves (40,000).
10. I have published a volume of poems.

It is a long list; yet I am not at all a hard worker—only a very regular one. . . .

* Afterwards called *Beside Still Waters.*

"I don't quote this for the sake of credit; no one can be more aware than I am of indolence and laziness; but I quote it to defend my manner of working—to show that even an indolent person who cares about his work, *can* produce a very fair amount of moderate work in a short time. The point is to care."

"*Magdalene, October* 1.—To King's Chapel—met the Bakers—Monty went in in state—I did not care for the service, somehow, no unction. Came out and saw several friends—Sir R. Ball, Lady Albinia, Vice-Provost, etc. Monty carried me off to his rooms, but found them sported, and I regret to say stamped and positively *swore*. 'D——n!' he said, standing there in surplice and Doctor's hood. This was picturesque. We went up the back way. He told me he returned with bewilderment and shrinking to his new work. So does the Dean of Christchurch, from whom I heard to-day—'my usual bewilderment at the beginning of a new academical year.'

"We were going to have had a talk, when J. W. Clark came in, looking very well; and discoursed about himself, his foreign tours, his library schemes, his books, his articles, for nearly an hour—expressing the most unbounded and acrid contempt for everyone else in the world. . . .

"He walked away with me, and told me more of his plans—the *restaurant* system for College Halls, full of sense; and one can't help loving J., though he does despise the human race, for his own geniality and affection, which are entirely sincere. . . .

"Then back and wrote. I had noticed in King's in the morning a fine-looking boy, evidently a freshman, just in front of me—lo and behold the same came to call on me, and turns out to be Mallory, from Winchester, one of our new exhibitioners at Magdalene. He sate some time; and a simpler, more ingenuous, more unaffected, more genuinely interested boy, I never saw. He is to be under me, and I

rejoice in the thought. He seemed full of admiration for all good things, and yet with no touch of priggishness.

"I wrote feverishly after that—dined alone—wrote again. . . ."

Of all the friends that he ever found among the undergraduates of his college, none was nearer or dearer to him than George Mallory. For both of them there was much reward in this alliance, which lasted until Mallory's death upon Mount Everest in 1924.

"*November* 11.—Slept rather ill—wonderfully elaborate dreams; Papa showing me a MS. book of his early poems, written in shorthand. On the bottom of one was written, in *his* father's hand, 'A similarly approving opinion of the advantages of conjugal love was expressed by the late Mr. W. Cobden.' The words 'W. Cobden' were impressed on the page with a kind of stamp, an oval line round them. The old, rather yellow pages, with the blue ink in which the poems were written, the blunt capitals of the stamp—I can see this all now with absolute fidelity. The human mind is a *very* odd thing. . . .

"Then to my dining-club—Foakes-Jackson, Barnes, Lapsley, Laurence; the guests, Adam Sedgwick, the Vice-Chancellor,* Wedd. I sate between Wedd and Lapsley, opposite the V.C., who was in high good-humour. His big, queer, ruddy face, all puckered and creased with geniality, his stiff mop of hair, his slight stammer, give him a *cachet*. . . . I can't reproduce his sallies. Their humour depends upon their sense of zest, combined with a certain quaintness of expression, and a very infectious laugh—together with a sense of personal kindness and interest. One can't help liking the man and respecting him, and though he is in a way undignified, he has the dignity of vigour and good sense and real simplicity.

* A. E. Beck, Master of Trinity Hall.

"The dinner was excellent—a little too good. The wine extravagantly so—an old Marcobrunner, a '93 champagne, and a Léoville '70 claret afterwards; also audit. I thought that everyone drank a great deal too much (except myself, of course—but that is taste, not principle); after dinner the decanters went round and round, and people drank both port and claret freely. I put a spoonful of claret in my glass and sipped it for the sake of geniality! . . .

"Afterwards things were not so merry. We smoked in a little slip of a room, in which people could not circulate or gather in groups. I got stuck on a sofa with Sedgwick,* and enjoyed the talk of this positive, brusque, pleasant scientist, interlarded with oaths. He has a curious admiration for literature, and talked books hard —with a half-regretful air, as a man might talk about vintages, without being able to tell them apart. I grew weary, not of him, but of myself. I did not want to sit in one place, boring one man to death; why can't there be more ease and simplicity about these things? Meanwhile a group scintillated at the fire, talked and laughed shrilly. How well I know that kind of false convivial excitement, which is not even pleasant. At midnight the V.C. rose, and crept downstairs, and so we parted. Let me note that the funny little yellow coach or sedan, which draws a lady from the great gate to the Master's Lodge, was standing out, there being a party at the Lodge. No one knows where it is kept. It must be quite an ancient relic. Finally to bed late, and dreamt horrible and elaborate dreams. So much for conviviality—an overrated thing. . . ."

"*Sunday, December* 10.—I was much grieved last night to hear of Jebb's† death. He had a great attraction for me—both the thought of his delicate and beautiful mind, as well as of the secluded scholarly character of the man. Of late, it seemed as if I had

* Adam Sedgwick, afterwards Professor of Zoology at Cambridge, died in 1913.

† Sir Richard C. Jebb, Regius Professor of Greek at Cambridge since 1889.

come nearer to him. He was always very cordial when we met. The last time I saw him was at the Board of Education, when he sate opposite me, and slept all the afternoon—he was obviously unwell.

"His wide blue eye, his veined and almost scarred face, thin whiskers, much brushed up hair and great stoop, gave him an odd distinguished look—half common, half refined. His sonorous, clear, poetical, resonant voice, always very beautiful. It was strange to see him *oar* himself along with his hand, as with a paddle, beating the air.

"He used to speak warmly of my English style. I felt somehow that he liked me. . . .

"Gosse in good spirits—we went to King's Chapel together and sate in the antechapel. The service very sweet: *Hark! a thrilling*, etc., made me want to be up and doing, though not necessarily on clerical lines.

"Then I talked to W.D., etc., in the court; wrote; lunched; walked with Gosse round Coton. A sunset of quite extraordinary beauty—the leafless trees, seen over bare fields, the hamlet roofs, the world beyond, and the sun sinking orange into smoky wisps of cloud, which he seemed to draw with him. We watched the crimson orb slip behind the hill. Horace Darwin and his daughter watched it too.

"We talked of many things. . . . He told me of a little autobiographical book he meant to write—his early days with his calvinistic father—the contest of paganism with rigid faith. . . . He seemed glad to be here, and to feel better after his quiet day."

"*The Old Granary, December* 16.—Such a beautiful day of calm, golden, chilly sun; everything sparkling and subdued, too. Letters and business in much mass all morning. A welcome letter from Esher to say that the King will now be able to look at proofs, etc., now that the crisis is over. A nice letter from the new Postmaster-General. . . .

"In the afternoon Monty came for me just as I was going to bike—so we walked together by Coe Fen, the

avenue, and out to Cherry Hinton. We went into the church, and looked at the delightful monument to a young Serocold, with the extract from Lord Hood's despatch, which begins, 'I have to regret, and which I do most sincerely,' etc. We also admired the beautiful Early English chancel, so light and clean and ascetic in air, with its slender shafts and rich mouldings. Monty, this great academical dignitary, in loose grey suit, white Homburg hat, small, ill-tied shoes, shuffling along merrily, pleased me. We rambled along inconsequently in talk as we are wont to do—always quite delightful. He is one of the few people to whom I can and do say exactly what I think and as I think it. He never misunderstands, is always amused, always appreciative. And yet I can't recollect what we talked about. We came back by an abandoned road by the huge cement works, which contrived to look sombre and solemn in the gathering dusk, with their huge chimneys belching smoke, their powdered roofs, their odd retorts and towers: the lights beginning to be lighted within, and giant shapes of moving beams and rods to move shadowily before the windows. It is all very well to think these huge places unromantic and ugly, but what would a mediæval knight have said if he had seen one at the end of a forest avenue? We came back in the dark by a long lighted road, the shops wearing a Christmas air. Then by Parker's Piece, the R.C. Cathedral standing up very beautiful over dark houses against a sunset sky. Then to a book-shop where he bought books—and so back to tea. Then I worked hard, a review of *In Memoriam* with Tennyson's own notes, a series of gruff growls and snorts of disdain—and other pieces. . . . Then dined alone; afterwards reading and writing till late. I like these solitary evenings now, and need no companion. I am reading the life of William Morris again. The frank and beautiful youth, so unconscious, so vivid, of these interesting creatures—he, Burne-Jones, Dixon, C. Price and the rest—pleases me by its fragrance and affection. And I regard it, too, as one of the best written biographies of the century,

if not of all English biographies. It is so perfectly balanced and proportioned—so just, so beautiful. But it makes one sad, too, to think that all these lives have faded into dust! If I could but get hold of a belief that would bring the death of sweet things into line with hope, what a difference would be there! I slept very ill, and read W.M. in the quiet hours between 3.0 and 5.0, the weir rushing outside, the night still and cold."

V

1906

It became clear that to spend the term at Magdalene and the vacation half a mile away, at the Old Granary, was not a good arrangement of the months; and the Old Granary too fell out of favour when the quiet mill-pool was invaded by all the holiday-makers of the summer. A smaller excuse would have been enough for the pleasure of changing houses. And so, in the Easter vacation of 1906, he is found established at the village of Haddenham, a few miles from Ely, in a house called Hinton Hall, surveying the wide green levels of the fen which he loved so well. As for the house itself, it appeared, as he said, to have been ordered and sent down ready-made from the stores—a hard-featured little villa, destitute of every grace; but it took his capricious fancy, and the silent waters and solitary pastures that surrounded it were all that the philosophic recluse of the House of Quiet could desire. He did not, in point of fact, desire them for long, and his solitude was nearly always shared with a friend; but he spent some weeks of the summer there very happily, writing and bicycling at the top of his vigour, devouring the countryside in long afternoons of exploration, racing home at the appointed hour to his chapter on the blessing of tranquillity, the curse of restlessness. His friends were not slow to admire how sociably he cultivated seclusion, how energetically he commended repose; and he laughed where he could not gainsay them—the

placidity of his books was less than ever the reflection of his life.

His friends might laugh, but they could also feel uneasy; for signs were not wanting that he overtaxed his strength. Apart from his work at Magdalene he was now perpetually dashing off for a day of business in London. He was a member of various educational committees, he was president of the Modern Languages Association, he was an examiner of naval candidates at the Admiralty; and what with lectures and pupils at Cambridge, and a daily correspondence inordinately swollen by the popularity of his books, the weeks of the term were as much of a scramble and a hustle by this time as ever they had been at Eton. He could not be temperate in occupation; and the strain upon his nerves began to be manifest even to himself when at length he found his fluency checked, his writing impeded, by difficulties that could only be a symptom of ill-health, for he knew no others. More serious, as might seem to those about him, was a sensibility of temper that was vexed increasingly by small things, slight causes of offence—a controversial mood that grew upon him; many pages of his diary in these months are filled with a record of irritation that was ominous, it is easy to see now, of trouble to come. By the end of the year he was already suffering from attacks of depression and listlessness that were a torment to a man of his vitality. If he could not at every moment be working, stirring, active in some way, the world lost all its savour, his spirit dropped in perplexity.

Most of the year, however, was fortunate enough. The three volumes of the Queen's correspondence were at last settling into shape; two or three books (of which only one was published, *The Altar Fire*) were written as enjoyably as usual; and a series of discursive articles for a weekly journal, the *Church Family Newspaper*, was started with such zeal that he was soon ahead with his contributions by several months.

And now he had definitely taken his place as an author high in the favour of a large audience—whose homage began to reach him in many forms, all gratifying, not all equally convenient. There was no fault to find with the form that magnified his income; this remained at a handsome height in all his working years henceforward. But his attached public was not content with buying his books in big editions; it also wrote to him—wrote in the warmth of its heart from all over the world, and never wrote without receiving a punctual, pleasant answer that encouraged it at once to write again. His legion of readers added their weight to a burden already severe. His courtesy was inexorable; he *had* to reply to every letter that ever reached him, and again to every letter that replied to his. And so the snowball rolled up, and the daily post became by far the most formidable part of his work.

As for his public and its tribute of devotion, he was always in two minds about it. Nobody could dislike to learn that his books were welcomed and treasured in all quarters of the globe; and nobody could find himself so endeared to a host of strangers without being touched and pleased. To his far-scattered correspondents, so long as they were content to know him by letter only, he was infinitely generous of his attention; and some of them, always on the same condition, became real friends. But his ironic sense, and his critical, were both too lively for complacency. Much as he loved his books in the writing, he looked at them with no indulgence on the shelf; and while he thanked his kindly readers, he appraised them, it must be said, with the frankest impartiality. He might feel supported at times by the chorus of their voices, but he was also embarrassed; above all he did not wish it overheard by his friends. He made many attempts to evade it by anonymity, once or twice so successfully that to this day there are books of his, shyly facing the public, which I believe have never been brought home to him. But in general

the secret was out before anyone was mystified; and from now onwards, do what he might, he remained—at a long arm's length—the master, the confidant, the confessor of an oddly assorted flock. We used to think with pleasure that not a few of these votaries, if they had had the fortune to see and hear him face to face in an unguarded hour, would have been shocked indeed.

"*Magdalene*, *February* 8, 1906.—After Hall I looked over the Prize Poems for the Chancellor's English Medal—ten in all. Two were *good*, one in blank verse the best, I think—but one in pretty triplets, decidedly poetical. Another had some fine stanzas: 'The cheerless-whirling wheel' struck me as a Tennysonian touch of high merit. The rest worthless."

"*Friday*, *February* 9.—A disgusting morning of letters—I wrote about 30. . . . Then I had a great pleasure—it was bitterly cold, but I bicycled alone, on frozen roads, out to Boxworth by Huntingdon Road. I had not realised how *thirsty* I was becoming for the country. Never did a sun-baked man drain a cup of well-water more greedily than I took in the impression of the fields wrinkled with cold, the low hills, the black pinfold-lighted tower of Lolworth, the partridges calling in the grass, the broad misty fen. I came back the same way; and then by invitation to tea with the charming Mallory, in his rooms in the corner of the court, over the road. We talked like old friends, mostly of mountaineering, and I was pleased at my entertainment. Then worked hard at various things. To Hall, which was cheerful and pleasant; and then I had to rush to St. John's to read a paper before the Theological Society. It met in rooms in the top of the furthermost corner of the New Court. I had never been here before. The stone corridors and iron-railed staircases are *horrible*—but the rooms have a certain dignity and style. In a long room, with green Gothic doorways, quite small, I found more men assembled than I could have believed

could have got in—forty, I should think. We began with prayer, very solemn. Then I read my elaborate and inappropriate paper on Personality in Art, sitting in a low chair in the corner with a glaring lamp. Then a few questions were asked, and I discoursed fluently but not well about Ruskin, Carlyle, etc., etc. Then it was brought to an end, coffee came in, and a group of very nice boys came round and asked me all sorts of questions. I only wish I did not feel so big and stupid, and so little like the celebrity they seem to regard me as. One, whose questions had struck me, with a very odd crop of black tangled hair, strangely parted, was most attentive; and finally walked with me to the gate, discoursing softly.*

"The great tower looked very fine in the moonlight, as we passed through the great splendid courts. . . .

"I liked my young friend—asked him to lunch; came back, smoked, worked fitfully at trifles, and eventually to bed, though dreading my cold room; and dreamed horribly—a confused dream of being back at Eton as a boy, of swinging by a rope from the ceiling of a great hall, my aim being to swing myself into a balcony at the side. . . .

"I forgot to say that on Thursday afternoon, about 2.0, one of the strangest storms I have ever seen came on. The air became dim and black—there were furious flashes of a sort of purple lightning, heavy peals of thunder, and then a furious shower of hail, so that the garden was whitened with it.

"They have not only felled the pretty alder, but pruned the plane, so that the houses of the Chesterton Road look in as by a window into the garden. It is rather pathetic that my original offer of trees to the College was just to fill this ugly increasing gap; and now, as long as I hold my fellowship, the scar will gape, and show the brick and slated houses through. The little slated turret which I see *hurts* my mind as often as I think of it.

"The garden is now full of mounds of earth, pits, trees and branches piled in heaps, tree-roots, ladders,

* He is to be recognised as Mr. J. C. Squire.

etc. Such a routing it has not had for a hundred years. I suppose it is right, but it is sad at the time, somehow. The very thing I want to do with the public schools!

"In rather a sad and fretted hour before the dawn to-day the following came into my head, I don't know why—I seem to have taken leave of poetry.*

"'Tis my delight to weave bright words;
Sweet words, soft pauses to discover;
To sing, as sing shy musing birds,
Over and over.

Fly high, fly low, bright words and sweet,
So ye fly hence, I care not whither.
Where stream and field and sunset meet,
Fly thither, thither.

I am one with all sweet days that fade,
When night her solemn heart discloses;
I am laid where dying summer is laid
Among the roses.

Ah, shrill and sweet the bright words rise,
Like burdened bees from flowers that hid them;
Bid them be silent, O ye wise!
I dare not bid them."

"*Magdalene, February* 19.—Woke early, much vexed at having to go away again. No letters! . . . Went pleasantly through to town, through a rain-soaked landscape, much flood-water out. Sent my things to club; and then off to Paddington and ran down the familiar line. We were soon at Slough; and then the well-known scene, which I have not seen for a year, began to unfold itself; Eton, in its rain-splashed meadows, under a bleared and hurrying sky, with a hoarse, muddy river plucking at the osiers; every window and chimney and tree and hedgerow known to me like my own body—and yet there was I, looking out upon it absolutely without emotion; rather pleased to know it all so well, as a bird might fly over well-known fields, but neither desiring to be back, nor regretting the past, nor wishing

* This lyric was included by the author in *Selected Poems*, 1924.

anything otherwise—with no feeling of tenderness or sorrow, only glad to be out of it all. It was rather degrading and discreditable; but still it is absolutely true. Then I got to the Castle, was greeted smilingly by the familiar police and flunkies; found Childers upstairs, everything all exactly the same—the rooms very comfortable, and Miss Williams working away next door. We did a lot of work, went right through all the strong-room papers, looked at everything, and I went through a whole batch of typewritten papers which had not been gone through before. Then we lunched and worked away quietly; then caught 4.25. The Dean in the train.

"The panorama rolled past me again, with the same insensibility on my part. Then up to London; and I had a little talk with the Dean; drove off with Childers and left him in Trafalgar Square. Then to the National Club—read and wrote; and then found Gosse, tired and excited, from a long day at House of Lords. He told me that he had been praising my educational views to Haldane. P. Lubbock to dine. . . .

"Then we went and talked to Gosse in the smoking-room; he was very brilliant and full of finished, amusing, polished reminiscences of his father and the Plymouth Brethren. Then Gosse fled; and Percy and I had some more talk. . . .

"I read over what I have written about Eton—perhaps I ought not even to put it down—'Cast no least thing thou lovedst once away'*—but I don't put it down as to my credit, only record it as a fact that I don't, and cannot, in thinking it over, feel the *least* emotion about the place. I am simply glad my time there is over; and I saw it as a man might see the galley where he had rowed."

He managed so to arrange his work on the Queen's letters that his presence was not again required at Windsor; and this was to be his nearest sight of Eton for ten years to come.

* William Morris.

"*Sunday, February* 25.—Sleepy and stupid. I preached in chapel; but the boat* had gone to Hunstanton, so the congregation was very small. But I had a pleasure, for Rogers came in to my rooms afterwards, to thank me for my sermon. He is an interesting boy. . . . Then I went for a walk with P.L. We found Warre in the garden, in high spirits, trampling among the flower-beds. . . . Then P.L. and I walked on, and had a long talk about relations with other people—very interesting. I have a sort of feeling, in discussing this subject with him, that he has a kind of secret, hidden from me, a secret which others share, in the matter. Then comes an outbreak like Howard's about my coldness, and I feel it more than ever. I asked him to explain what he felt. . . . While he talked I half understood, but with that half-comprehension which one feels will slip away from the mind. To me relations with others are in no sense unique; they are only one of many relations, with waves and winds, trees and sunsets. Then I am cursed or blessed with an ease of speech, and give my intimacy easily, because, I suppose, it is not *sacred* for me. Relations are not holy or solemn or awe-inspiring for me—only pleasant or unpleasant; and my tendency is to welcome in a congenial person very affably, and to make the best of an uncongenial. But to P.L. and his school, this is a kind of emotional harlotry, I think. It was a deeply interesting conversation, but left me aware that friendships, etc., were for P.L. a series of deep thrills—exultations and agonies—while for me they are only like flying sunlight on a bright morning.

"But then I have a peculiar and fastidious horror of my kind—I have often to leave the pavement of a crowded street and to walk in the road from a horror of breathing twice-breathed air. . . .

"I sate next to Warre, and I became gradually aware that the awkwardness and coldness of the previous day was *only* pure embarrassment. He talked freely, kindly, pleasantly—and as the evening went on, got more and

* The crew, that is, of the college boat, in training for the Lent races.

more jovial, telling masses of very ancient stories. He begged me to come to Finchampstead. What an odd thing the man's prodigal greatness of temperament is. He is neither eloquent, nor humorous, nor convincing. He is an essentially *dull* man in mind. But he is a great commander. We all floated, like little boats, on the tide of his strength, deferred to him, tried to please him, were grateful for his notice. The Professor, so intolerant of most men, sate forcing loud and harsh laughter over jokes which he neither heard nor understood. We luxuriated in Warre's geniality as in a glowing fire. . . ."

Whether P.L. indeed committed himself so deeply in the afternoon's talk can never now be known; but the evening in the college combination-room, with Warre expansive in ease and freedom, is very clear in memory. So is also the sight of that fine old English gentleman, " the Professor," infirm but indomitable, rosily convivial, the sturdiest and most uncompromising of the pillars of the college: Alfred Newton, Professor of Zoology and Fellow of Magdalene from 1866, until his death in 1907.

" *London, June* 23.— . . . I drove off to Athenæum. Wrote letters, and went to see the Blake exhibition. Surely people must be cracked who make such a fuss about Blake's little funny drawings. There is some imagination in them and much quaintness. But the absurd old men with beards like ferns or carrots— the strange glooms and flames and tornadoes of vapour, the odd, conventional faces, the muscular backs, the attenuated thighs! Blake was a childish spirit who loved his art, and had a curious naïve use of both word and line and colour; and some fine simple thoughts about art and life. But he was certainly not ' all there ' —and to make him out as a kind of supreme painter and poet is simply ridiculous!

" . . . I then went to the Academy. I enjoyed a good many pictures, the landscapes mostly. The place was

not too full; the portraits not so badly painted as of such surprisingly horrible people . . . but the landscapes were the best—the boiling over on to level sands in a sunset vapour of great pale sea-waves—a dark fen-like place of water and rushes with a gale blowing, etc., etc.

"Then I lunched; and went to the National Gallery, where I revelled so long among the British landscapes —such men as Glover and Nasmyth, such pictures as Mousehold Heath (I don't like Constable!)—that when I got to the Tuscan pictures I could only feel them absurd. But of course all these things are only symbols of inner raptures.

"I saw the new Velasquez. A stupid vulgar picture; and I am entirely unable to believe it is by Velasquez.

"Back to Athenæum. Tea, read *National Review*, and found a disagreeable attack on me, as a critic of Eton, by X., the brilliant Eton boy—rather a friend of mine.

"I don't like this—but it is useless to moan and think other people prejudiced. I have said what I thought about Eton very frankly, and I have somehow jarred on these enthusiastic Etonians. But it is very odd to find him say that I want to turn all boys into dilettantes—when I think that is the very danger of the classical system—which produces, I think, a few dilettantes and a lot of ignoramuses. . . ."

"*Hinton, July* 7.—This morning I am all right and very cheerful. Let me hope it was the thunder which upset me—in any case it was very trying. The heat is terrific. Letters and business most of the morning.

"The great veronicas are in full bloom in the garden, haunted by innumerable butterflies—such a pretty sight; I shall always, I think, connect them with my first memories of this place. Another very characteristic sound here is the song of the yellow-hammer, which has become very familiar to me; some sharp, sweet notes,

followed by an almost harsh, prolonged in-drawn note, lower than the prelude.

"I went off in a south-west wind to Ely, and then on by the most level roads to Prickwillow, a hideous God-forsaken village in the flat—then on by Shippea Hill, a little old fen-island, to the station called Burnt Fen once (now Shippea Hill). It was all very tranquil and pretty—the little black-boarded cottages and ancient pumping-mills, with rich gardens, were highly characteristic. I enjoyed myself mildly; train to Ely, where the dignified stationmaster touched his hat and greeted me warmly for the first time, having seen me, I suppose, with Pell, and believing me to be a worshipful man. Then slowly back; then I wrote a little study, "In the Fens," for the *Atlantic Monthly*. I pleased myself over this; it was pretty, I thought, and well proportioned.

"It is calm, still, and hot; I sit writing by the open window, the birds singing softly, while I wait for George Lyttelton. Being in rather a melancholy mood, I have thought much and sadly about Eton to-day. Not that I wish to have acted differently in any sense; I would do exactly the same if I had it all to do again. But I have got somehow into unhappy cross-purposes with what I discern to be a beloved place, a sort of mother to me. . . . I should like to sit on one of the towers and survey it all. None the less am I thankful, deeply thankful, to have done with it all; in fact my mind is a curious blur of mingled moods about it. . . .

"George arrived at 7.45, very big and robust and smiling and serene—and we had a pleasant quiet evening, though he surprised me by flying so early to bed. I went much later, and had a terrible dream of the hanging of some person nearly related to me at Eton; the scaffold, draped with black, stood in Brewer's Yard; and I can't describe the speechless horror with which I watched little black swing-doors in it push open at intervals, and faces look out. The last scene was very terrible. Warre was there, rubicund, but anxious, in robes, reading a service. The prisoner stood close to

me with a friend, holding a little prayer-book. I could see his face twitch and grow suddenly pale. When the long prayers were over, he got up and ran to the scaffold, as if glad to be gone. He was pulled in at one of the swing-doors—and there was a silence. Then a thing like a black semaphore went down on the top of the scaffold—(which was nothing but a great tall thing entirely covered with black cloth)—and loud thumps and kicks were heard inside, against the boards, which made me feel sick."

"*July* 9.—Only a very few letters—but the little *Life of Keats* came, and I allowed myself to read it—so much of the morning drifted past. I do not know why, but I find myself always in a strange excitement of mind when I draw near to Keats in any book. It horrifies me to read of the poky and vulgar people he lived among; and he himself was so *fine* through all—so fine, even in indolence and misfortune—so manly, in his own way, though tempted by luxuriousness of nature—looking through the mist with so clear and high a gaze. I can't help feeling that this view of life, which he held and expressed, was truer in some way than his diseased, jealous, fevered, tortured dreams; but why should the latter be suffered to cloud the former? Why, if it is important to the world to feel truly and to admire beauty, should such a one as Keats have been made but to be overthrown? The ghastly suspicion of course is that God is not concerned with the development of the artistic sense in the world—or with the religious or even moral development either, for the matter of that. Yet they are *there* as truly as the physical and commercial instincts; only God seems to favour none, to protect none.

"I found scribbled at the end of the Keats a bit of a ten years' old journal, written as I came away from Dunskey in '96. On the eve of such great changes! It is only a note of landscape beauties, rather thin.

"But I can't get the thought of Keats out of my head; I yearn after the *kind* of thought that filled his mind;

because it seems to me—I say this without conceit—to be one of the few instances of the expression of a man's poetical and artistic faith that I meet with in literature that I feel to beat every moment stronger, fiercer, deeper, more intense than my own. To this he added the supreme art of expression; and I daresay there are hundreds of poetical and artistic persons who *have* felt much more intensely than I—I only say I don't find their confessions in literature anywhere—and I would give a great deal for so frank a confession as Keats's Letters give.

"The goldfinches in the shrubbery have delighted me—they swing on the tall larkspurs and the milk-thistles. They flash about; they sing briskly—I can't take my eyes off them."

Howard Sturgis and P.L. are next seen spending a Sunday at Hinton; and if the guests were loquacious, let a snapshot photograph, taken in the garden, attest the fact that our host was not silent either. I may add that P.L., on his recommendation, had just been appointed to the charge of the Pepysian Library at Magdalene, a post which he held for the next two years.

"*Hinton, July* 14.—In the afternoon we walked by the fields to Wilburton, and looked at the church. The scent and sound of the great lime-tree, full of flowers and bees, came softly to us in the still afternoon. How strange it is that the lime-tree smells so perilously sweet, and yet that a single blossom has hardly any fragrance—only a vegetable catkin sort of smell. Then along the fen-road—and we sate long by a stream looking up to Haddenham. I don't know what we talked about; it was not talk—it was opening a sluice between two minds. . . .

"After tea I worked a little and he sate out sewing and reading till Percy came. We had a delightful evening, but the worst of these days is that guests *do* take up time; and my diary is written so long after that I have

forgotten all the details, all the funny stories, all the delicious imitations, all the pretty flowers and leaves we strawed in the way. Anyhow it was a very sweet evening, and we went late to bed. It was E.W.B.'s birthday; I did not forget that."

"*Sunday, July* 15.—The two would not go to church, but I did most reluctantly. It was hot and dreary with a small congregation. When I got back we talked on the lawn, we talked at lunch, we walked on the road to Aldreth and talked all the time, we talked at tea. I can't say what it was all about, but it was *most* interesting, moving about from one subject to another, like a leaf blown by the wind. At 6.0 Howard proposed to leave me; we had been talking since 12.0 on end—but Percy protested that our time together was short. However, I made an excuse. The truth is that a weariness, deadly, deep and inconceivable, fell on me. I felt as if I would never be able to talk again; and the thought that we might be going on talking from 6.0 to 12.0 without a break was simply intolerable. It seems to me exactly like eating meal after meal. I do not only not like it; I loathe it. . . . After all sociability is a pleasure, or supposed to be one; and the pleasure of the whole thing simply flew to shreds in a gale of fatigue. I did a little reading and writing by myself, and was greatly rested; in reading and writing the mind plods at its own pace and does its own work. In talking it has to leap, to run, to race; and it has, too, to be perpetually and swiftly apprehending another point of view, which is fatiguing. I cannot conceive how Howard can talk as he does all day, and talk brilliantly and beautifully, too—and yet cannot write a book. We did talk again all evening—but we interspersed the reading of scraps out of books. Then to bed—and Howard said in my ear, without exaggeration or extravagance, I am sure, that he had not had so happy a time for years. But this pleasant rapture was spoilt by H. and P. lingering on the upper landing and exchanging anecdotes, till I thought I should have fainted. That is the worst of great talkers, that they

can't *stop*. How very ungenerous I am! I have really enjoyed these days tremendously; but I own to some fatigue."

"*Tremans*, *August* 8.—Edward Horner arrived, very tall, gracious, courteous, pleasant. . . .

"I left him to himself all the morning, and found that he read a Greek play. Then we went off to Lewes by the 1.40, he in Panama and flannels, so much taller than myself. It was very hot and we had neither of us watches; so we walked fast; the grass of the down was slippery walking.

"We talked a great deal about Eton. I have never heard, since I was a schoolmaster, a big boy talk with more absolute freedom from the boy's point of view, and yet with much perception and sympathy. . . .

"Certainly somehow the walk will remain in my mind as a very beautiful and memorable thing. It passed swiftly, like a dream. We sate for a time on Ditchling Beacon; and then to the windmills; it was not too hot up there, but as we got down to the level, fierce heat fell on us; we got to Hassocks station with but four minutes to spare. I don't know why I enjoyed it all so much. Yes, I do; because here was an absolutely ingenuous and modest boy, entirely frank, giving me, not a peep, as often happens, but a steady look, without any self-consciousness or pose, into a very charming, natural, good, honest, sweet-tempered mind. He is not a deep speculator, he is not hard-headed, not critical, not very poetical—nothing in particular; but he loves life and people and things of interest; and then too he has the charm of manner, voice, glance, gesture, that one can't analyse, but which is there, and is so fugitive a thing.

"My interest takes two forms; one to retain his affection—because he evidently is really fond of me—and the other to give him good advice, which I faithfully did! The pleasure is that though it is getting on for two years since we met, and though I did not know him very well—at least I found it hard to make way with

him—yet he has kept up relations all along, and at the most changeable, oblivious and fickle time of a boy's life—and now proposes of his own accord to come here. I find it very difficult to say quite what I feel; and yet I don't think I shall forget the soft green sides of the beacon, as we sate in the grass, falling steep to the plain and the woods and the tiny hamlets—and how the sun filled all the hollows with a golden dusty light. The plain was merged in haze.

"We got home by seven. I went and scribbled a little. A quiet evening; E.H. very unwilling to go to bed—but somehow when he talks and smokes he becomes a different being from what he has been by day."*

"*Magdalene, October* 24.—A *great* pleasure, a letter from John Morley, who, by H.M.'s command, has read over Volume I, complimenting us sincerely, generously, and gravely on the excellence of the work. A great relief and a deep pleasure. . . .

"I forgot to say that I had a delicious experience the other day in seeing a covey of partridges near Wilbraham drop over a hedge and settle. I stole up, and had the pleasure of watching them for some minutes *at home*—through the hedge, not a yard away, lying, feeding, sitting, piping. Such a pretty family party—and one shoots them! I am giddy and stupid this morning—but *much* amused by *Punch*—which attributes to me the *Apocrypha* and *Shakespeare's Plays*, and says they will shortly be issued under my name, with a characteristic preface—and that I am engaged on a work of sombre thoughtfulness, called *At a Safe Distance*. This is really very funny, and I find myself giggling over it—but one must take care not to be too much in evidence.

"I went out very unwillingly to lunch with Keable. There was a silent young brother, and another man called Gray. I jested, and without difficulty, though I was giddy and uncomfortable—and then rushed off to vote for the new Mathematical Tripos. It was an odd

* Lieut. E. W. Horner, 18th Hussars, was killed in action, November 21, 1917.

scene. There was a gathering of about 400 people, circulating slowly. Some very picturesque figures. The Master of Trinity in a skull-cap, carrying voting tickets in his cap as if soliciting alms; he had written them all on the wrong papers! . . . The Vice-Chancellor sate in his cope in the throne. I had many amicable talks, mostly with Masters of Colleges—Pembroke, Corpus, Christ's and King's. I tried again and again to escape, but was caught by lobbyists at the door. Robin Strutt employed direct mendacity. Barnes wept tears, Shipley seized my sleeve and pulled me, not heeding my struggles, and Lady Darwin (I think) gave me several blows. I stayed nearly an hour and enjoyed it very much, though the system of voting is a vilely wasteful one. We carried all our points. J. W. Clark, rubicund and busy, wrote the figures on a blackboard in the gallery. The Proctors were inaudible, and there was little or no enthusiasm.

"I must record an amusing fact. Yesterday at my lecture I spoke of Shakespeare's plays being attributed to Bacon; there was a loud laugh—unaccountably so. I now see that most of the men had seen *Punch*, where they are attributed to me. . . .

"Then I came in—no longer giddy—and wrote a long educational article. This morning I did a lot of work on the Q.V.'s Letters; and discussed the organ plans with Kett. So it has been a busy and pleasant day, full of variety and amusement. . . ."

The *Eumenides* of Aeschylus, with Stanford's music, was performed at Cambridge this term. Mr. A. F. Scholfield, now (1926) University Librarian, took the part of Orestes. The statuesque appearance of the herald in the final scene was long remembered; this small part was played by a freshman of King's, Rupert Brooke.

"*December* 4.—We went to the Greek play. I took Sympson and Mallory, and we had the best places in the house. The Bishop of Ely just behind us, who

was most polite; many scraps of talk with old friends; Selwyn of Uppingham, most cordial, pressed me to go and stay there. O.B. was a sight of horror, so leering and gross. The play was very impressive, the music beautiful. I saw it over twenty years ago. I wept copiously when the Furies first burst into song in the dim temple. Orestes was excellent, so tired and despairing, but both Apollo and Athene rather pompous. A herald made a pretty figure, spoilt by a glassy stare. The final procession most beautiful. But the play itself struck me as incomparably bad and stupid, like a dull and affected fairy-tale. I am always disposed to think the victory lies with those who perceive; but these ugly blood-sucking Furies, pursuing a man to eat him, in a dull mechanical way, bought off at last by an absurd promise of privileges, and thwarted by the votes of ten idiotic old men presided over by a goddess—could fatuity go further? I can't think what the Athenians were about."

In December he paid a visit to an old friend and Eton colleague, the Rev. Lionel Ford, Headmaster of Repton—afterwards Headmaster of Harrow, and now (1926) Dean of York.

"*Repton, Sunday, December* 9.—Called in an orange dawn; a furious whirl of sleet came over—it was a fine frosty day. I watched the boys coming back from early chapel, while I dressed—in tall hats; they look like Eton boys. Then came Lionel in great majesty, stepping delicately, every inch a headmaster. Breakfast—and a big strong, cheerful, jolly baby arrived, nearly two years old, to be viewed. He took an immense fancy to me, and sate on my knee all breakfast, playing with my watch, helping me to eat, smiling at me. . . . Then to chapel; the boys standing outside in rows to talk in the cold; masters in gowns and hoods. It is a poor little building, but the woodwork good. I sate next L.F. in a kind of pew with stalls under the gallery; the gilded angels with trumpets, supporting the organ, quaint and pretty—this is

Tom Carter's work. The service nice, not very hearty; the behaviour of the boys *perfect*. Indeed both last night, and still more this morning, I got a very strong impression of a sort of simplicity, freshness and purity about these boys. Last night their courtesy and attention were marked; there was no sort of discipline kept—it was all spontaneous and unaffected courtesy. To-day the manner of the boys in chapel was ideal. I did not see a single whisper, a single act or sign of irreverence. Yet it all seemed natural and spontaneous, not drilled—like the well-born boys of a good, virtuous and well-bred family. The perfection of manner—better than Eton, because more simple and less superficial. Perhaps it is hard to judge, but they also gave me a feeling of great manliness and good tone. I would send a boy there with great confidence.

"Then after an interval, in which I wrote letters, we lunched with the boys—eighty in number—in L.F.'s house. The place must be well-arranged, because one would never know there were boys so near. The place, a big hall with many tables; Stratton carving far down the room; L.F. and I sitting with prefects at a high table. This again was nice—a delightful boy next to me, like the best kind of Eton boy, perfect aplomb, and yet simple, courteous, agreeable. A clever, smiling creature opposite. Talk easy. We went afterwards to the House, conducted by Smith-Roose, the head of the school—again, such a nice creature. Went into many studies and shook hands with many boys. . . .

"Then L.F. and I went a walk. . . . We talked easily. I came to the conclusion that L.F. is one of the happiest men I know. He is at the head of his old school, an unquestioned influence with boys and masters. He has pulled it up, he has put it on a good basis, he has got a fine and beautiful tone to prevail. He is healthy, happy, modest; he enjoys his work; he is *most* happily married to a delightful, capable, accomplished, affectionate wife; he lives in a beautiful house, and he is not overworked. If this is not happiness, what is? Add to it a contented

and not over-energetic constitution, so that he enjoys leisure. . . .

"(Next morning).—I woke early, but not dejected. Heard the boys stirring faintly above as they dressed for early chapel. Almost wished myself a schoolmaster again; and indeed if I were robust, untouched by years, sound in nerve, there is nothing I should like better—except perhaps writing; but I would not really go back."

"*Hinton, December* 16.—Pitiless rain, which is yet so cold that it does not melt the wet waxen snow. . . .

"I expected Lapsley to lunch, but the cab returned empty. I read the Browning letters—and went to see the Vicar . . . but he was fled. Went for a solitary little walk, not unhappy, to Wilburton, on frozen, sloppy roads. What went moving through my thoughts like a strain of music was the memory of the love of Browning and his wife. The letters are marvellous—so gasping, so incoherent, so affectedly depreciatory, yet they set the heart aglow, because the real thing is there, the love 'because I am I, and you are you.' It is a thing which *many* people feel, very few can express. Of course it is all transcendentalised and intellectualised in these letters—but that is the central flame. What would I not give, I thought, for such a love! How have I missed it? I suppose the answer is that I have had my share and more than my share of fine things—and I have somehow missed my way among them. . . . But the more I grow to feel, as I do, that no personal identity survives the grave (yet I cannot *bear* to give up the hope) the more I desire but once to have the great devotion. That is the worst of imagination. It makes one feel as if one *could* experience it, while I think in my heart that I am not capable of it.

"Lapsley came to tea, having missed the train and driven from Cambridge. He seemed in good form, and we had a pleasant, rather academic talk. He seems to me to be really rather swamped in academical

things just now. It is inevitable; but I don't like to see so finely tempered a sword used to chop firewood. Still he is doing a great work, no one greater; and to cut, one must have a narrow edge. But he seems a little withdrawn from me thereby. I am glad to have him here. We talked briskly enough all the evening. . . .

"I have been doing a lot of little odd jobs. I have sent off my *hymns* to be printed in a pamphlet, made up my accounts—my income for the year has been well over £3,000—written up letters, sent off some Q.V. proofs, arranged papers, etc., etc. This has amused me; but there is something wrong with me and my head, which swims and fails. I woke early this morning, plunged in gloom. I was foolish enough yesterday to do some more writing, and I wrestle and pray for new ideas. How little it matters to anyone else, how much to me! . . ."

"*Tremans, December* 31.—Last night Luxmoore* touched me much, when I said how happy we had been with him, saying 'Bless you! how good you have been to me!' This morning he went off to stay with the Duke of Wellington. I felt like saying good-bye to an old and dear relation. . . . Hugh arrived; and I had a little call from Beth, who could not abstain from going to look at his room. She has a love for her last nursling, which exceeds her love for any of us. I went to see her before dinner, and said I would send him up afterwards, which made her light up with keen delight. Dinner pleasant enough—and some disjected talk afterwards cut off by prayers, with general alarums and excursions. Hugh and I played the piano and organ a good deal. I am in a feeble and discontented condition, quite off the lines, I don't know why. My fertile mind, instead of accepting it as a passing phase of tiredness, forecasts the worst. I made up my mind to-day to have a stroke of paralysis, and to spend a few crippled years in a sort of heavenly resignation. But I can't disguise from myself

* Mr. H. E. Luxmoore, his friend and colleague for many years at Eton.

that I have been in very indifferent health for some time, quite inefficient and run down.

"So ends 1906. It has been a prosperous year. I have made a sort of name as a writer, and amassed much money. Magdalene has flourished greatly. I have made some new friends. I have not regretted my decisions. If I had been well, it would have been a very happy year indeed—in so far as success in a chosen line is happiness. If I subtract from it all the dark mood in which I write, the year would be and ought to be one of my most tranquil and fortunate years; because it would seem as if Providence had wanted to show me that I did right in keeping clear of Eton by loading me with little successes.

"But I seem to be tending nowhere in particular. My desire is to write a great and beautiful book—and instead I have become the beloved author of a feminine tea-party kind of audience, the mild and low-spirited people, who would like to think the world a finer place than they have any reason for doing. Well, I don't doubt that if I were a bigger and a better man I should have more to say—but I am petty, timid, luxurious; and so my faculty of writing runs to waste in quiet pools. What I desire is more reality and more courage; to find some reservoir of strength and patience to draw upon. But one cannot make it—one can only be given it—and it is not given me! Yet I do earnestly desire a more excellent way, though I am sadly adrift. 'I have gone astray as a sheep that is lost: O seek thy servant—' but I have no right to finish the verse. I have followed my own will in everything—and I have excused my weakness and perversity by saying that I am made so. The world is a difficult place; and when one walks in a vain shadow, as I have done of late, it is rather a terrible place; yet it is beautiful, sweet, delightful—and one seems to realise that more, year by year—and yet to be kept from joy by a hard, fine, transparent and impalpable veil. The only thing that remains with me at this moment as a bright little ray is the delightful and warmhearted letter Lapsley wrote me. '*Se faire aimer*,' he quotes,

'*c'est se faire utile aux autres*'—yet never did any human being feel less capable of inspiring love than I at this time—a half-contemptuous pity, perhaps, but no more; because my suffering, such as it is, is a purely morbid and self-centred suffering—the darkness closing in upon the flickering flame.

"Let me close the year with a prayer—

"*Ostende mihi spiritum tuum!*"

VI

1907

The shadow of depression darkened gradually, lifting at times, settling down again, through a year of much anxiety. It was a baffling affliction, and he could never discover how best to treat it—whether by disregarding it, staying at his work, following his normal round, or by breaking off and changing his ways and resting as well as he might. He tried the first method, and things went better for a while; he got through two terms at Magdalene with fair composure. But the strange anguish returned—like a raging toothache in the mind, he used to say—and he tried to take a real holiday in the summer at Hinton, forcing himself to idle at ease and waste time like other people. He did his best, he wrote as little as he could bear to write; but the habit of indolence was so unnatural to him, it required such an effort to maintain, that it seemed to leave him only more exhausted than before. By the autumn his mood was so heavy that he found he could not endure the term at Cambridge. He appealed to his good friend and patient adviser, Dr. H. Ross Todd, who prescribed for him a few weeks in a nursing-home in London, and then a holiday abroad. He went to Italy in December, taking P.L. with him for a companion, and spent a month in Rome and Florence; but neither was this unusual adventure —it was more than ten years since he had last left England—of much avail to him in his pain.

Nothing from without had seemed to cause it, but it was sorely increased by a grief which fell this

summer upon himself and his family. His sister was struck by a far more disastrous malady of the mind; and for the next eight years the slow and uncertain fluctuations of her condition were watched in deepening anxiety, with the hope of her recovery continually deferred. There is no doubt that Arthur's dismay under his own affliction, his perpetual dread of the future, was much intensified by the thought of his sister's illness; but in fact there was no likeness between the two cases. The clarity of his mind was never affected; at his worst he always knew himself a sick man in an enjoyable world that he could no longer enjoy. Yet, while the trouble lasted, he could never believe that the next trial of his nerves would be surmounted as safely as the last had been, and before every fresh effort to be made he foresaw calamity.

A bright mark in the summer was the conclusion of his four-year-long task on Queen Victoria's letters. The three volumes were published in the autumn; and if by that time he could take little interest in their appearance, it was a deep relief to have got them off his hands before his condition made work impossible. He wrote, or rather he finished, no other book this year, but his weekly articles in the *Church Family Newspaper* were continued until the autumn.

In June, 1907, Professor Newton, gallant and genial and tyrannical to the last, died at Magdalene. His house, the Old Lodge, standing within the precinct of the college, was offered to Arthur Benson, who decided to move thither from his rooms in the Pepys building. But he had hardly made the change before his health took him away from Cambridge for the winter, and it was not until the following year that he was settled in the house which he was to occupy for the rest of his life.

"*Magdalene, January* 31, 1907.—I reflected sadly today how I tended to squabble with my women-friends. Here have I dropped out of all or nearly all my feminine friendships. I never see Lady P., I hear nothing of

Countess B. I have lost sight of B.M. I have insulted M.C., alienated Mrs. L., shut up Mrs. S.—and so on. Yet I do not squabble with my men-friends. . . . I have had rows with Howard, but he is more feminine than most of my friends. I think it is a certain bluntness, frankness, coarseness, which does not offend men, but which aggravates women. The thing which has tended to terminate my women-friendships is that at a certain juncture they begin to disapprove and to criticise my course, and to feel a responsibility to say disagreeable things. One ought to take it smilingly and courteously; and one would, if one liked the sex—but I *don't* like the sex. Their mental processes are obscure to me; I don't like their superficial ways, their mixture of emotion with reason. One's men-friends never criticise, they take one for better and worse. One gets plenty of criticism from foes, and one supplies the harshest condemnation oneself. My own feeling is that one's duty to a friend is to encourage and uplift and compliment and believe in him. Women, I think, when they get interested in one, have a deadly desire to improve one. They think that the privilege of friendship is to criticise; they want deference, they don't want frankness. I don't want to excuse myself, because I think it is a vital deficiency in me; but it is *so* vital and so instinctive that I don't see how to cure it, and I cannot even frame an effective desire to do so."

"*Magdalene, February* 2.—A curious day. It was bitterly cold. Ward came at 10.0, and I dictated twenty letters, mostly to female admirers. They are very curious documents, these long, intimate and familiar letters from unknown people. My instinct goes rather against them, but I don't see that it is really worse than talking frankly at a dinner-party. To-day, however, there are two very strange documents. One a long, charming letter from an Australian girl . . . twelve pages of really rather beautiful writing—very informal, very full of youth and zest. And one mysterious letter from an American widow, who implores me, as a man of

honour, to keep her letter secret, and hints at establishing a sort of secret understanding! I reply by a stiff dictated letter—feeling the dusk rather unwholesomely fragrant. Then Grimble to lunch—and we discussed freewill and necessity over a warm fire. Then Shipley came, and we rode stoutly by Waterbeach and Landbeach. He complained of the pressure of his work; but he enjoys it, he fingers many pies. I sate down to write . . . Then Molar Cole* dropped in, bearing Europe on his broad chest. He discoursed on things fiscal, and I chanted cheerful responses. So the time fled away; and at 8.0 I drove off to King's, to dine with Monty. This was an interesting party, Owen Hugh-Smith, Caryll Lyttelton, Carey, Neville Lyttelton, Lady L., Miss L. I took in the latter, a pretty and charming girl to whom I rather lost my heart. But the dinner-table was so big, the food so elaborate and slowly served, that my miseries fell upon me; and it seemed that my own bewildered thoughts tangled and blurred the clear thread of my little companion's ideas. She, Miss L., became pale, tired, nervous. I wanted to amuse and interest her, but I could do neither. I am not fit for society just now. One of my horrors is that I hear my own husky voice talking, and seem for a moment to be out of the body, listening to myself, wondering what I shall say next. I had an interlude with the General, who was next me; full of the most robust and genial life. . . . He told me that the Duke of Cambridge had once said to him that he had been discussing a certain person with papa. 'The Archbishop said'—said the Duke—'He is the d——dest old fool that ever went on two legs!' 'His Grace's own words,' the Duke added. Also that the old Duke of Cambridge, the father, once stayed at Hagley, and was present at family prayers—he sate with his hands on his knees, beaming. At the end he said to Lord Lyttelton, 'A d——d good institution.'

"Then we went off to the drawing-room, where Carey sang divinely some songs of A. Somervell, that made me nearly weep. The General played patience. . . . I drove

* A. C. Cole, sometime Governor of the Bank of England, died in 1920.

away with Caryll, as charming as ever; we passed the proctors ranging mysteriously, and chuckled to think he was sinning by driving in a cab. I came back gratefully to my rooms. The odd thing is that an evening like this, with its mixture of interest and discomfort, does not tire me at all. These nerves are tiresome things—they leave me well and strong for ordinary purposes; but they settle like vultures on the things that in my normal condition I enjoy most, and spoil all sociable things for me. . . .

" Only for a few minutes to-day have I had a sense of peace and joy—as we rode slowly in silence along muddy roads, with the huge flat about us, bounded by the low far-off hills, great golden rays streaming down from banks of purple cloud. It seemed then as if one could live a sweet and solitary life in the country silence—but one could not! That would drive one into morbid gloom. One must go in and out, and bear the fret and fume—though I felt as though I could have sat at a window, looking out over the huge pastures, down to the glowing west, with line after line of dyke and hedgerow, and asked for nothing but to be left alone and quiet, living passively and serenely, like grass or thorn. How I hated the thought of Cambridge at that moment, the packing together of lives and ambitions and relationships —I seemed to want nothing but to sit idle, breathing the frosty air. . . . I would not live one moment of my life over again; and, as I say, I would like the memory of it all to perish, and the very spirit within me to be blotted out. Yet, strange to say, with all this, I feel myself to be tough and vigorous in body; and no less so in mind. I feel indeed as if it were my very vigour and vitality that make me suffer as I do. If I were simply languid and mute, I should think differently—but I am full of ideas and interests. I am fevered rather than feeble, like a strong man with a broken limb. To-day I have written, dictated letters, thought, talked, worked with an energy which I used not in the old days to possess. I can't rest for a moment; and my distresses seem to me to be rather the nervous weariness of over-energy than the collapse of

weakness. And then behind it all lies a curious sense that there is something left for me to do—what, I cannot divine. Well, it is a strange mystery. If I am wanted, I shall be sent; if I am sent, I shall go. At present I seem to be held back, bound, fettered—and I hobble along feeling my chain.

"The place is full to-day of highly ridiculous men come up to vote, pleased with their gowns, full of mute affection. An absurd Archdeacon, in fur coat, tall hat with strings and rosettes, gaiters, silk gown, purring along. But I hear to-night that the δίκαιος λόγος has prevailed, and that the Mathematical Tripos is to be reformed. There is a faint hope of better things in this —but it will delay the ejection of Greek, I fear."

The "Byron portrait," mentioned in the next extract, was a painting which he had discovered and bought in a dilapidated condition some years before. When cleaned and repaired, it was found to be a portrait of great charm and beauty, but the painter has never been identified. It was reproduced in Mr. R. E. Prothero's edition of Byron's works (1898), and now hangs in the hall at Trinity.

"*Saturday, February* 9.—Hunting came, bringing the Byron portrait. Every time I look at it the beautiful soft eye of the charming boy seems to regard me reproachfully for giving him away; but he ought to be in Trinity. Hunting also brought in loads of garden produce, carefully packed, which he sold to a greengrocer, and brought me the price ruefully—*5s. 6d.*! . . .

"At 7.45 I drove off to Pembroke, found the Master —looking pale and sad, I thought—and Mrs. Mason, by themselves. But a collection of buffers and bufferesses streamed in. I was the only unimportant person there. Wilkinson, the beloved Primus, looking so strong and plump, with a touch of colour in his cheeks, and with the same wistful and fatherly meekness; a beautiful figure, aged 74, with his cross of amethysts.

The Master of Trinity, very bland, paler and more brushy-haired than ever—Mrs. Butler, very small and grey and demure—Donald and Lady Alba, Lady Loch, Stanton, Mrs. Selwyn, Miss Wilkinson, and W. O. Burrows, now Archdeacon of Birmingham, as neat and good and brisk as he was when I first knew him at Eton thirty-three years ago, and where he was so good a friend to me. I took down Miss W., a bright, cheerful girl, very proud of her father, and ready to talk about their busy life. I also had a good gossip with Lady Alba. . . .

" The most dramatic moment was when the Master of Trinity, in the middle of his soup, was overtaken by a sudden and violent sneeze. He held one hand over his face. His spoon plunged into his soup, while he felt with hurried dignity for a handkerchief. It seemed to me like a picture of Blake, like God, in the Job designs, sneezing. Then the loud, sonorous, and unctuous *Amen* that he chanted in response to the Master's grace. . . .

" Ah, there was one great moment I had forgotten, when, after dinner, Mason handed round Gray's big commonplace book, with his own MS. of the *Elegy*. That nearly made me cry, it was so great and so authentic. I notice that he spells the word *Huswife*—and that the Ode to Music originally began—

Awake my lyre, my glory wake—

altered to ' Aeolian lyre,' I suppose because the other was too scriptural. Not a very lively evening, but a sense of being in touch with some big people. The Primus rather abashed by academical distinction; he lay smiling while the Master of Trinity told long rotund, gracious stories all about nothing. Such an evening is all on the surface. No one says anything that is not decorous, commonplace, dignified—no peeping into hearts or minds. I came back and sate up late writing and reading—and slept rather ill."

" *March* 2.— A soft, mild day, very languid. I wrote and dictated letters. Donald looked in, and I went with

him and got my codicil witnessed. I put this down because I have had a strong impulse to complete my arrangements. If it were to be a true presentiment, it is worth stating; if not, it will do to be amused at in the future. I dictated a long letter to one of the ingenuous spiritualistic ladies who write to me, who tell me the absurdest stories, and wish me to be instantly converted to spiritualism. . . .

"Dove, the steerer, lunched with me; I expressed my hopes that there would be no row to-night. I can honestly say that the one day in the year when I loathe being in Magdalene is the last day of the races. One never knows what these inconsequent young men may do. Why I dislike a row so much is that three-quarters of the fun of it is that the Dons are thought to object; and here we are on such easy and friendly terms with the men that the jest is a rude and offensive one.

"I wrote some more letters, and then went down to the boats oppressed with sighs. The infernal Literary Society dinner hangs heavily over me; moreover the days fill up with engagements, so that I really hardly ever have a perfectly quiet normal day here. I don't seem able to help it—people ask one so long ahead that there is no escape.

"I got down about 3.30, and saw some of the racing; but I was alone and met hardly anyone. Very few dons about, and the young men seemed to-day to be unnecessarily young. . . . Then back, where I wrote a little rather feebly, and sent off a packet of letters. I am dining out again, and would it were midnight and all well! It is all very well to say that one should not be timid and anxious. God knows that one does not want to be; and perhaps in the dim hereafter it will be seen to have been useful and fruitful; but one can't see it now; and not only do the obstacles depress one, but one's own lack of courage in facing them is more deplorable still.

"It was misty to-day, and the sun broke in soft flame-like orange on the ripples of the stream. How beautiful if one had the heart to enjoy it! Then it clouded over

and a whispering rain fell, which I hear rustling in the yew-tree, a peaceful sound.

"Well, I went to Trinity to my Club. It is very odd that I, the least clubbable of people, should belong to so many of these symposia—four or five. The Club was there, Lapsley, Foakes-Jackson, Laurence, Barnes and I. Our guests, the Master of Corpus, Cunningham, Walter Durnford—the latter very gouty. We had a sumptuous dinner and drank fine claret. . . . All pleasant and easy, and I had abundance of nice things said by the Trinity men about the Byron portrait. I enjoyed myself and had no *crise*—I believe I am improving. But gloom fell on me at the thought of going back, and what might be happening at Magdalene. The great court of Trinity was full of uproarious undergraduates racing about, hooting, putting the lamps out. . . . The streets were quiet, and Magdalene, *mirabile dictu*, was absolutely quiet save for a few belated revellers standing about, one or two the worse for liquor. But I don't mind that! I don't think it does any harm for a cheerful, warm-blooded undergraduate, after a course of training and rowing hard, to talk and sing and drink too much at a bump-supper. . . . I sate quietly for an hour, read and wrote; thus does one afflict oneself in vain."

He was now elected a member of the old-established dining-club called the "Literary Society." For the rest of his life, excepting the years of illness, he attended the Society's monthly dinners in London with much constancy.

"*March* 4.—I got off about 2; in the train I had the strength of mind to look over essays for Wednesday. I went to the Athenæum, hating the idea of the [Literary Society] dinner, and all the fuss, and spent a feeble time there reading and turning over papers and magazines. . . . I went up to the smoking-room on my arrival, and there was Stanford playing bridge. He has just refused to write an ode, setting my words to music, for Repton, on the ground that he has not a

moment to spare till May. . . . He played bridge till 6, when he came over and talked to me. He reiterated his statement about having no time. He said, not very gracefully, that to compose such a thing meant a lot of work, sketching it out, writing it, scoring it, copying it: 'Ye can't dump it down on a piece of paper like a poem, my boy.' He looked well, but very pale—though handsomer than of old, I think—rather a fine expression.

"Then I drove to Lambeth. . . . Dressed, and went off at 8.30 to call for the Archbishop at the Athenæum, taking with me his dress-coat. I found him there, all eyes, very full of talk. Met Austin Dobson and Basil Champneys, also bound for the dinner. Drove to Prince's, Jermyn Street—rather a Pompeian place, heavy gilding, etc. Found a company gathering in a saloon, and was introduced to Spencer Walpole, the historian, a kindly and genial man, and many others. When dinner was announced, I was led in, like a blushing bride, and sate next S.W. in the seat of honour. . . .

"The dinner was good and elaborate—much champagne. I was much at ease, and had no nervousness at all, though I got tired. A man went round and collected our shot; we paid, I think, 12*s*. These great people are pleasant and easy, and I think rather more interesting than the ordinary don; but it was very like a high-table dinner up here. They were very kind and welcoming to me, and made me at home. . . ."

"*Hinton, April* 19.—A long and interesting letter from P.L., to whom I had sent my big book, *Diary of Artist*, to look at. He does *not* approve, and says so. I had hoped he would have discerned a figure within, lying in however cramped a position. He praises my style, but tells me that I have not concentration or thread enough, and that by too sedulous a pursuit of the sweetness of beauty I miss its nobleness; so, too, by looking too close for tranquillity in life, I miss something grander—something harsher, rougher, and more dark. This is all both beautiful and true. But I don't think one can resolutely

set out in pursuit of the uglier kind of beauty. I don't think I am made to discern it. I see sometimes, at a concert, by their faces and exclamations, that my *convives* have admired a piece of music that has been to me nothing but desperate and hideous clatter and bang. Well, am I to go on hearing such things, trying to persuade myself that it is fine?

"As to the rougher, harsher, nobler aspects of life, I *see* the crags and precipices of it all; but with fear and dismay. I cannot write of it—and as for searching for the tragic in life, I do *not* believe in climbing into dizzy places if one has reason to think that one will be dizzy there; it ends in meekly tumbling and toppling down. Of course it all depends upon how likely one is to topple and tumble, whether one likes the risk or not, whether one is intoxicated by the earlier elation. I am not; I am ambitious, but both timid and indolent; and I think that, this being so, I shall do better to spend my time in pointing out nests in hedges to unobservant people—the little effects of unobtrusive beauty which I see and which most people overlook—than in scaling the crags. . . .

"I worked very hard between tea and dinner, and wrote no less than four pieces—4,000 words, I think; *The Librarian* and *The Cathedral Tower* for the prose lyrics, and *Augustus Hare* and a reflective passage about *Motives for Solitude*. Dinner; reading; bed. I was overshadowed, but only dimly, by the misery of pitching my tent again. Slept sound."

In April he took his usual holiday with Tatham —this year at the King's Head, Cirencester. The pilgrimage to Kelmscott, the home of William Morris, recorded in the following extract, was repeated more than once in later years.

"*Cirencester, April 5.*—The weather has recovered itself again; a hazy *mackerel* sky with a light breeze. After writing many small letters, etc., we bicycled off at 12.0 for Fairford. The road there uninteresting. The church

is finer than I had expected, rather solid, of an orange sort of stone—very late Perpendicular. It stands at the end of a pretty little piazza of quaint houses. Inside it is a wonderful place. The windows are *marvellous*—most of them familiar to me from the book of reproductions we have at home; the faces of the old saints and patriarchs, as E.W.B. used to point out, so *ugly* and full of character as well as humanity—so different from Mr. Kempe, and still more from the rabbit-jawed type. I care less and less for the archæology of things, and more and more for their beauty. These old mellow pictures, rich as the wings of butterflies, many of them half obliterated, fed and satisfied the eye; but I doubt if they would have had much beauty when new. There is a whole row of clerestory windows of the persecutors of the Church, people like Nero and Domitian—and a most singular humour displayed throughout in numberless demons, green and brown and blue, covered with scales, with long tails and noses like augers, all as merry as grigs and tormenting souls with a will. An unhappy child sits in a kind of churn, being diligently churned by a cheerful demon in blue. The panel representing hell seems to me purely humorous, but I suppose it fed the sense of awe and horror once. Very little anywhere which could appeal to one's emotion—except a sad soul, looking out of a barred window, in a grey rock, through a waft of flame, while the Saviour comes along below, *conterens portas aereas*. . . .

"Then on through rich, flat water-meadows to Lechlade, another charming place of old comfortable houses of many types. . . . The sedged river, with the fragrant smell of the river-water bubbling through the sluices, into a pool where a teal was diving, made up for me a scene of great sweetness—so English, so serene, so utterly unaffected. Then on by a rough road to Kelmscott. We found it, a little hamlet of grey houses, in the middle of the alluvial plain; save for the low hill opposite, and the charm of the gabled and Georgian houses, it might have been in Cambridgeshire. More than one pretty dovecote, gabled and stone-tiled. Then

at last we saw, at the hamlet-end, the house which is so familiar to me from pictures, and which means a great deal to me. It was much simpler, more rustic, more shy and wild than I had expected. It is an incredibly picturesque house, with innumerable wings and gables, mullioned, stone-tiled; with some variety of style (e.g. little pediments over some attic-windows), stone balls on the gables. It is much shut in by outbuildings and walls, and the byre of the farm with the barns comes up quite close to it. The old farm-buildings are very picturesque too, and the rough ditches, the farm-lumber everywhere, the willow-patch, the poultry all about, add to its unaffected air—a house meant for use and comfortable life, not at all for artistic reveries. We wandered in. The farm-men very courteous, but we were refused admittance, though Mrs. Morris was away, very peremptorily by a tall, grave, polite man who was digging gravel. Still we got a view of it all round, and peeped in at a garden door, seeing some of the shaped yews Morris used to clip; the standard pear-trees—flowers coming up in the borders, bays, box-hedges—all very sweet and simple. . . . It certainly has an extraordinary beauty, because it looks lived in and worked in. I should have liked to see the tapestry room where Rossetti worked. But I have no great *love* for either him or Morris, though I have a romantic admiration for the definite, clear-cut, beauty-haunted lives they led. Something of Morris's own love for the kindly earth, and the simple country business, hung over the whole for me. We could see the river making its loops in the water-meadows a furlong away. . . . The rooks were noisy in the elms, and the spare sunshine, with the big white clouds in the sky, gave it all a wholesome beauty, though I should like to see it in summer foliage.

" We went to the little church, a sweet place, of many styles. . . . One thing vexed me; in an angle of the transept outside sate a rather pretty young lady in black, and a group of silly children, rather dressed up, in pinafores, were being photographed by an artistic gent—all holding their arms up. This gave a sense of sham æstheticism,

which spoilt the entire simplicity of the scene. . . . It pleased me to think of Morris striding bluffly about here, loving everything on which his eyes rested, full of go and zest and country happiness. This was a very memorable hour to me.

"Then off by a hideous rough road, which struck off from Lechlade to Hatherop . . . and so to another enchanting place, Bibury, a village nestled in a steep hollow by a clear stream. . . . Then home against a strong headwind, through Barnsley, and so down to Cirencester.

"The sight to-day of a huntsman in scarlet having a mug of ale handed up to him at an inn-door by a smiling girl made a pretty vignette. But as I sit now quietly after tea, recalling and sorting my impressions of the sweet things I have seen, I am filled with the old melancholy wonder as to what it all means, why one should love the home, the earth, the scene so passionately, while one knows that one is speeding into the darkness. . . ."

"*Magdalene, April* 24.—My forty-fifth birthday. For I think the first time in my life I had not a single line from anyone, or a single word on the subject of my birthday—by the last post, however, a little letter from Fred. This shows that one gets older and more isolated. It was what is called a beautiful day, warm and soft and sunny—a day on which, coming after cool weather, I feel as if I should burst; my arteries beat, my head is heavy. But it was kindly meant, I doubt not. I worked hard at proofs all morning, and finished a great batch. Then Lilley came to lunch, and was very nice; such a fine fellow in his quiet way. Then I rode with P.L to Newmarket; the air full of wild scents and woodland odours, and every bush and wood shot with green. We ran through Newmarket and on to Snailwell. Newmarket, a vile town; the little boy-jockeys everywhere, with gaiters and pert faces, fill me with a sort of terror, and the big rich houses are horrible. By train to Cambridge, and so home after a pleasant ride, full of inconsequent talk. Then some writing. . . . Then Hall, with Bellars and

P.L. My new sconces in the gallery lit up, as in my honour. Then to my rooms—a thoroughly quiet normal day, such as I dearly love. I have practically decided to give myself a present—a motor. I think I am rich enough; I should not hesitate to start a stable.

" I suppose I ought to be in a devout and solemn mood; but I am not. I have enjoyed the day, and I don't mind being forty-five. . . . It seems a very short time since my twentieth birthday, when I was an undergraduate; and I am very much the same person as I was then. I think that my chief ambitions then, if I had any, were to get some money for the sake of liberty, and to win some literary success. I have both. The former seems to give me very little liberty, the latter is very different from being what I expected—because I have got the *kind* of literary success, a popular success, that I certainly never expected, and I am not, what I hoped to be, reckoned among literary artists. The strange thing is that my schoolmastering period seems utterly wiped out of my life, as if it had never been. . . ."

" *Whit-Sunday, May* 19.—What incredible folly one gives way to! I have spent a *miserable* twenty-four hours since yesterday at 11.0 when I consented to preach. Why miserable? I don't know. I had a neat typewritten simple sermon ready. I had only to stand up for ten minutes and read it out to a congregation of some twenty people, all of whom I know, and whose opinion I do not really regard. But the thing has hung over me like a black cloud. A fear of breaking down, of turning faint, of hurrying out, etc., etc. I have enacted a dozen possible scenes over and over. My sleep last night was broken with fearful dreams—a huge function at Eton, which I was to address. . . . A vast, incongruous party was assembled. Last of all papa came in and was very gracious. I waited and went away with him, and he was in his easiest, simplest, most loving mood; he suggested a walk, that we might have a long talk; ' It is such an age since I have seen you, dearest boy,' he said—and smiled.

Then the recollection of the function which was then proceeding, and probably waiting for me, came on me, and I ran from him in stricken haste, while he waited smiling by the gate.

"So it went on all night—waking in misery; but I got a good deal of sleep. Of course it shows that my nerves are a good deal in rags. Then I read a little, breakfasted, read more—and went in feeling fairly cheerful. But in the middle of the service my terrors came on me, and I felt I could not stand it—my legs quivered, my voice became husky. Then came the hymn. Then my own voice making the invocation. And then I read the whole sermon, clearly and strongly, with due emphasis, without a touch of nervousness, gazing benignantly round—and it was that performance I have dreaded for twenty-four hours! Yet no amount of deriding myself as a fool, or even the prudential thought that fretting over it was the very thing to bring the catastrophe about, will help me. . . .

"Simpson came in to lunch—pleasant and intelligent—and we talked on many matters. I don't quite understand the lie of his mind; but he is fond of good literature and austere books. Then I went out, really feeling rather tired. It was cold and fresh, but with gleams of sun. I went along the Backs, and how I hated the good-humoured, ugly, shoving, noisy democracy! I turned into King's garden and walked there a long time round and round. The place is very beautiful, and always suggests to me paradise. The way in which the lawns run in smooth inlets, in and out of the shrubberies, the edges of the beds all fringed with a foam of flowers, is very sweet. The real misfortune is that the garden has fallen into the hands of a botanist, whose idea is to cut down trees and do everything for the sake of having specimens of flowers, with names on tin labels. It is like turning a country-house into a school. . . .

"But I felt somehow that I was nearing the end, or near the end, of my tapestry of life. I have used up my strength, such as it was, and my reserves. I am tired, and my only way of fighting tiredness is to tire myself

afresh. It takes people in different ways, and that is my way. . . ."

"*Hinton, June* 28.—Many letters and proofs. We started to bicycle at 12.0. My bike punctured in the drive; but we had out the motor at once and flew to Ely, only to find that our train only ran on Mondays—so there was an ebb! The motor had gone when we discovered our loss—and so we took our lunch, walked by the river and hired a boat. We rowed, or rather Mallory did, along by deserted wharves, grass-grown and melancholy, by cottage gardens and willowy islets, to a place where the Cathedral stood up over the orchards like a crag; and here we lunched at our ease and discussed absolute beauty and the beauty of Gothic architecture in particular—about which I am gravely sceptical. Then caught the 2.0 train to Lynn and went on to North Wootton. I liked the great rich flat pasture fields by Lynn, with the big thorn bushes and elders, and still better the wide marshlands to the north with the flood banks, over the big sands and creeks of the Wash, with their splendid and romantic names—"Stubborn Sand" and "Great Black Gat," &c. Here we decided for Castle Rising. We walked through North Wootton, and tried to order tea at The House on the Green, but were rejected, and felt like the Apostles with the Samaritans. Then a charming common, with sandhills and fern and fir-trees opened before us, full of poultry that ran to be fed—and so by a sequestered lane to the village, the great keep peeping through trees. We trespassed here and had to climb a spiky gate. Ordered tea at a nice inn and went up to the Castle. It is simply enchanting: a huge moat, full of nettles and clinging elders, with the great grass-grown mounds all about: then a bridge, and you find yourself in a sort of cup-like hollow in the top of the great green hill, where there stands a Norman keep, unroofed but extremely perfect. . . . It was very grand inside, and gave one a sense of an old, rough, ugly, full-blooded life. The thing I remember is the growth of mallow, borage and snapdragon. From

the top a fine wide view over the tree-tops. Mallory made me shudder by jumping lightly up on some ruinous masonry, with a sheer drop of 60 feet beyond, to look at the view. Then we got down and had tea out on the lawn—but had no time for either church or almshouse. At the latter the old women wear red cloaks with Howard badges, steeple-crowned hats, high-heeled buckled shoes, and are ruled by a *Governess*.

"It was pleasant out there on the lawn; but we were hurried—flew back to the station over the pretty sandy common.

"A horrible old woman in the train, like a bishop. She had put a great tin trunk in the corner seat, and was wrapped up closely, though the heat was suffocating. At intervals she drank brandy. But I could not wholly hate her, she seemed so anxious and sore-stricken at the perils of the journey, and so resolved to safeguard her own health and comfort. A great solemn face with twitching brow and oppressed eyes. Then there was a sickly school-teacher, reading Geo. Meredith, with a violin. . . .

"We were soon at Ely—and flew back by motor. I read and wrote a little—even breaking out into a sonnet, which I suppressed. Then dinner, music, and a little talk. It has been a quite perfect and delightful day, a day in a thousand—full of pretty sights, little adventures, and all filled and rounded by easy simple natural affectionate talk with a delightful boy who seems at his ease with me and treats me like a good-natured uncle. . . . I don't quite like being used as though I were so harmless and old—I feel so young and rash! At least quite as much, if not more so, than I used to feel. He told me that I was looked upon as a kind of "ghostly father" to the whole college—a person, I suppose, of mild and amiable ways, always ready (it seems) to pour out pious advice. I don't feel as pious as I am thought to feel, certainly!—nor quite so mild and tame. However, it was intended as a compliment, no doubt.

"I hate his going away, and have a great desire to make the most of these beautiful days. One does not often

get the society of an ingenuous and congenial young man, who is also sincerely affectionate, to oneself; and perhaps it is rather a dangerous luxury. Still it has beguiled my depression in these gloomy days as nothing else could have done; he has walked with me as the angel walked with Tobit."

"*Hinton, August 5.*—Rather an indistinct day. Fine and hot, though storms predicted (Bank Holiday). Spent much of the morning in clearing up accumulations. I can hardly believe that I have been here about two months and done so little. I do not suppose I have worked so little for years. Went off at 1.0. The swallows at Earith were sitting on the telegraph wires in hundreds, the wires quite bent with the weight. I rode to Somersham and Chatteris, lunching by the wayside close to a huge plant of dead-nettle with purple flowers, covered with peacock-butterfly caterpillars—black, pointed, writhing things. At Chatteris I drank and explored the hot dull yellow town. There is one huge house in it, like a suburban mansion, the kind of place I remember in Richmond, yellow brick, with a pediment—but the drive is grass-grown and the garden all weeds: the Rectory, I think. Then out towards Stonea, and finally got to the Ireton Way. A good many Bank Holiday people about. Just beyond Mepal there was a party lunching by the roadside, a respectable tradesman, I should guess, and his family. Two of the girls shouted impudent rude things to me—incredible manners. The English middle-class expresses its joy of heart by being rude. That is our idea of geniality and humour. . . . Home to tea—in mildly good spirits, after a feeble melancholy morning, making plans and devising how I should live in every house I passed. To turn the old factory at Mepal into a phalanstery with a court and water-gate is my present plan.

"But I am not sorry to go; I have had a bad time on the whole here, and have been chastised with scorpions. I hope I am a little better—I don't know.

"I wrote a study of Newton last night—and shall finish it to-day, I hope; it is a little photograph rather than a picture of the man.*—I have finished it—a big bit of work—and I find myself writing with extreme ease.

"I went up to dress and looked out over the peaceful pasture, with the old reedy fish-pond and the willows in the centre. The lowing of cattle, the barking of the bailiff's dog, the only sounds. It would be a sweet place if one had a contented spirit or a quiet mind: alas I have neither—and I find myself craving for some near companionship, some enduring love, to help me along. But that I have forfeited, and one must just fare onwards as one can.

"Chatteris was 'emptied of its folk this summer morn'—but the Eastern Counties Democracy are lacking in grace. They make holiday in an ugly way—nothing Athenian about them."

"*Tremans, Sunday, August* 18.—This morning about 8.15 began a creaking and rustling outside—someone moving about as if everyone were ill. I could not sleep, and so lit my candles (the room is so dark) and read. Then came more and more cautious arrivals, rustling and creaking—one would have thought that there must have been twenty people. Then a celebration in a room four feet by three. . . . I don't under-value the feeling under it; as I said before, it is a symbol, and anything does for a symbol if one is ebullient enough. I don't mind their doing it, and I wish them to get what raptures they can; but yet there was a sense, when I came down to breakfast, of *their* having been engaged in some virtuous exercise, "playing at holy games," as Rossetti says, while I was rather reprobate. . . .

"The day is hot and wet, a steep rain falling out of the sky; the house like a vapour-bath; everything unutterably hot and languid and stuffy. It is partly that, and partly also a real disgust at life and its pretences which breeds these wholesome reflections. One could

* Included in *The Leaves of the Tree.*

hold one's tongue about such things, of course; but it does not make them worse to write them down. . . . To me, the further I search, the wider spreads the desert and the dimness. But —— and —— seem to me to build themselves nice little houses and to say, "This is *all*; see how nice the rooms are, with the curtains well drawn; there is not anything outside." But if one says, "What do the windows look out on?" they say that the pattern of the curtains is so pretty that it is a pity to draw them, and that artificial light is really better for the eyes. And then if one does twitch the curtain aside and see the ghastly glimmer of the formless twilight fading on the leagues of sand—well, one can't well return to the wall-papers and candles, however much one may dread and hate the desert. . . .

"After lunch L. went to see Beth, and I found him there with the dear old lady, showing him her gallery, which extends over seventy-three years!—from Bolton Abbey to Tremans. What a beautiful life it has all been, and how vain to say that it has been achieved by any sense of exercising her *will*—only by a natural beauty and lovingness of heart and mind."

"*August* 24.—A letter from Gosse, asking me to come and see him. . . . I lunched and corrected proofs in the train. Then walked straight to the House of Lords through tortuous streets, ending up with the Abbey. *What* a funny place the Abbey is! It is very noble, in its darkness and mistiness, but spoilt for me, I confess, by the crowds. The monuments fill me with delight—the more absurd they are the more I love them. . . . The statue of Wilberforce interests me; if it were of the wickedest man that ever lived, a man satanically cynical, it would be said to be characteristic. Then some of the recent burials; a president of the Institute of Civil Engineers—I had never heard of him —has a huge brass on the floor, where he appears in frock-coat and trousers. Street, the architect, is buried there; he kneels by a crucifix in an Inverness cape. And yet the Dean won't allow the smallest memorial to Mrs.

Browning! It is the rooted distrust in the English mind of an artist—you must *do* something else as well. Was there ever anything so ridiculous as the reputation of John Morley, a man who has written a few fairly good books, whom we are asked to regard as a great man of letters! The Abbey is so interesting because it reveals the topsy-turveydom of the English mind so completely—the worship, not of the people who will last, or whom others will hold to be our ornaments, but the man of the hour, the representative of privilege and rank.

"I went to the House of Lords. I had never seen so many peers about in those stately rooms and corridors. They buzzed like a wasps' nest if you push a stick in. I suppose they feel like that, and almost smell the fuse. I found Gosse in the library—a blazing fire, and three or four very shady and dickey-looking peers smoking. . . . And these are the brightest jewels in Britannia's crown, enshrined in all their lustre in these padded cases.

"I went off with Gosse to his private room, where we had a very interesting talk—about books, letter-writing, authors, his new book and a dozen other matters. That dark room, with its mullions and the glow of the electric lights on the shining red leather chairs and sofas with their gold portcullises, will long remain with me. He took me down to see the library vaults—such a mass of rubbishy books. . . .

"Then I went to see Murray, but found him out; had my hair cut by my literary barber, who discussed the Queen's letters with me. Back, walking, to the National Club, where I had tea, wrote letters, finished off proofs; and from there *I sent off the last proofs of the Queen's Letters*. A little river-wrack, so to speak, of individual pages will return to me—*but the book is now done*."

"*Skelwithfold, October* 3.—Woke to much wretchedness of nerves, agitated and unhappy; but this cleared off when I got up. It was a fine, soft, sunny day. . . . At 12.30 walked down to the gates, and found the Hays

waiting in a smart blue motor. . . . It was pleasant whisking along the steep, leafy lanes, with fine views flashing out every minute. We got into a road parallel with Coniston lake, and were soon at Brantwood. It is now a very big, pleasant, irregular house, of white rough-cast, ingeniously contrived to climb the hill, with a roadway taken under a fine simple arch at the back. It reminded me very much of Tan. The idea of a big luncheon-party was oppressive, but I ended by really liking it. Mr. A. Severn came out to meet us, a handsome, rather whimsical, amiable, leisurely man. . . . Dear Mrs. Severn, stout, fuzzy-haired, kindly, with a motherly smile. We had a big and long lunch. . . .

"Then I had a beautiful hour. Mrs. Severn took me everywhere. I saw Ruskin's study, with the chair and the round window looking out over the lake, where he sate, his writing-table, his presses and bookcases of mahogany—the things all solid and not a bit artistic. Here was the Richmond portrait, and a very little, most interesting water-colour of him by himself. I took down many of his MSS.—and she showed me a book in which he collected Greek mottoes for the days of the year. I found on my own birthday the motto, *ἐὰν γὰρ καὶ πορευθῶ** —I don't recognise it—but it had a very beautiful significance for me in my present mood, like a word out of a wise and fatherly heart, bidding me journey on. Then to the drawing-room, with some fine drawings of his own. Then upstairs to his first bedroom, with the little octagonal turret, by which he could see the view all round, and then to the little plain room where he died —his mahogany bed, ugly white paper, bookshelves, and the walls hung with priceless Turners, with the W. Hunt picture of grapes in the centre, and a funny sketch by Ruskin père. Mrs. Severn told me how he died, sitting up in bed; two days before he had been perfectly well. She cried a little as she told the tale. . . .

"Then I strolled alone, through copses and lawns, and out on a grassy terrace with a noble view of the lake and the great cirque of mountains. I was glad to be

* From the Septuagint, Psalm xxiii, 4: "Yea, though I walk . . ."

alone. The whole place incredibly beautiful; the sun just touching the great flanks of the hill with gold. . . . Ruskin lived here for the last twelve years without ever leaving it.

" Mrs. Severn came out to find me; we went back, saw J.H. manœuvre the motor with a sense that it was the only thing worth doing; and then came kind farewells, and we whisked off. . . .

" It has been for me a very sacred and beautiful pilgrimage indeed, coming in this overshadowed time—and I shall long remember the house, and the hazy hills across the lake in the warm soft sunny afternoon. . . . I rank to-day among the memorable days of my life; and I was glad that for the time being I was in perceptive spirits, and not overtroubled by my little miseries. I suppose I am better than I feel; but in this soft air I seem to be invincibly languid—*ἐὰν γὰρ καὶ πορευθῶ*."

VII

1908–1909

He remained under the burden of his depression for nearly two years more. During all that time, though company and occupation could bring an intermittent relief, there was no day on which his mind was free from the torment of his malady. It was difficult for those who saw him, talked to him, travelled with him while he was in this condition to understand what he was enduring; often there seemed to be little amiss with him, in body or in spirit, and he might appear to be only more pensive, less gaily interested in the world than usual. His diary, which throughout this attack he still continued to keep, is a strange revelation of the dark fears and agonising pains that were concealed, with much considerate fortitude, from all but a few of his most intimate friends. Even they, perhaps, may hardly have suspected how dire his sufferings were, and how perpetual; yet the truth of his account of them is attested by the eagerness with which he records from time to time a more hopeful day, a few hours of ease, some distraction that he was able to enjoy. It was an affliction that changed and varied from one moment to another like a physical pain, now lighter for a space, now heavier, now sharp to the limit of endurance, and its caprices appeared always unaccountable.

Divers methods of treatment were tried, under the advice of Dr. Ross Todd—travel, idle country-life, seclusion and rest in a nursing-home; but at length it

was judged best that he should return to Cambridge and to so much of his normal occupation there as he could force himself to undertake. And so in the autumn of 1908, after a summer spent mainly at Tremans, he took up his abode in the Old Lodge at Magdalene, and made a gallant attempt, not without success, to carry out his usual engagements. But there was still another year of the same distress to be endured before he began to be conscious of any lasting relief; and meanwhile he daily believed himself to be on the brink of disaster—not death indeed, for which he fervently prayed, but madness. There was in fact at no time any real cause for such a fear; but he could never be reassured, and hundreds of pages in his diary are filled with the record of deepening and darkening apprehension. At last, towards the end of 1909, the cloud began to lift, the misery strangely and swiftly to abate; and within a few weeks he had passed from utter despair to the full height of his customary vigour and happiness. His recovery was almost as sudden as it was complete, and to himself the ending of these long woes seemed no less mysterious and inexplicable than their beginning.

There is little to be quoted from the volumes of the diary in which the tale of distress is followed from day to day. For most of the time, at Tremans, at Cambridge, or in the company of a friend at some country-inn, his outer life went forward much as usual; but he could only write of it with the constant iteration of his lament that all was pain and darkness within. Those who have suffered the visitation of this form of neurasthenia will understand, I suppose, the nature of the ache which gnawed at his mind; to those who have not it can never be made intelligible by description. The period covered by the anguished chronicle shall accordingly be passed over very speedily, with a pause upon two days only—two days on which it happened that his trouble was lightened for a while. Such days there were now and then, always noted and recalled with gratitude in the diary, but the peculiar experience

described in the first of the following extracts was not to be repeated for many months.

"*Tremans, December* 21, 1908.—I came down rather nervous and jumpy, but really felt somewhat better. I read a book, *The Shadows of Life*, by A. D. Sedgwick; but these books of emotion and the sufferings of different temperaments, good and evil alike, harrow me fearfully. Can the people who write about suffering have ever really suffered?—with the long-drawn desperate suffering in which I have spent this year? It seems all too bad to write about. . . . I wrote a lot of letters and walked with M.B.—unpacked my burden somewhat, not morbidly, but pensively. . . . What I can't bear is to be told that I am behaving 'splendidly.' My sense of decency and courtesy has just enabled me to hold on, but I have been a horrible coward all through, and a selfish one as well. Hugh came to lunch, very full of life and spirits, and his account of his doings made me writhe at the thought of my futility. We walked out in a damp, warm mist, and argued furiously about religion and science as usual. . . . Then after tea—rather a limp meal—I went off to try and write, expecting my usual collapse. To my surprise and joy and intense relief I found myself, instead, flooded by a sense of happiness and contentment. I can't say or describe the blessedness of the hour. It may only be a little variation of my wretched state; but I found my serenity, my interest, my enjoyment suddenly and miraculously restored. I felt like a convalescent, too happy even to write. I just sate in a blessed peace of mind. Of course it won't continue thus—but can it possibly be the turn of the tide? I dare not think it; but I do thank God with all my heart and soul for withdrawing the dreadful cloud from my brain, and allowing me to live again for a little. . . . I won't dare to anticipate. I only record that to-night, for the first time for months, a ray of real hope has darted into my darkness; and I will try to grope my way out, not forgetting the days of my imprisonment and despair."

This promise of hope was not yet to be fulfilled; but he was occasionally able to find some enjoyment in a country excursion, with his motor-car and a friend, and his exploration of the English landscape was continued in many regions, to the west and the north. After the visit to Italy, already mentioned, he went no more abroad. In Rome and Florence he had been diligent in sight-seeing, not without interest, but he never again had the least inclination towards any scene more exotic than Dunster or Broadway, Ashbourne or Settle; these and their like were to satisfy him for the rest of his life.

"*Ludlow, June* 7, 1909.—A good night; woke cheerful. A long and enthusiastic letter from Marie Corelli. To Bridgnorth, by the Clee Hills. A pretty town, with a leaning fragment of castle. Two churches; both the upper town, sitting on its steep ridge, and the lower town across the Severn are picturesque. . . . Then on to Wenlock —a beautiful ruined abbey in a kind of wild garden, with a wonderfully picturesque house at the side. The garden was beautifully kept, and the place lovely; but I don't really like a ruin—there is something of the corpse, of the skeleton about it, a sense of death. . . . So by Craven Arms, and saw Stokesay Castle on the right, charmingly picturesque and sedate, over its orchards. The whole day was sunny and sweet, the air fresh and fragrant, and I had a faint sense of enjoyment and peace. After tea the indefatigable Ainger proposed a stroll, and we went to the Castle—saw the roofless hall where Comus was acted, and many noble ruinous chambers. As we went out a flock of sheep, who had been grazing in the grassy court, were driven out by a shepherd-boy, and made a pretty scene. In the evening I was tired, but cheerful. Ainger is a delightful companion, so quietly kind and fatherly. I like being commandeered by him, and love to see the diplomatic way in which he does what he likes best (not that I have any counter-preferences) under the impression that he is consulting my wishes all the time. . . . He never makes any allusion to my being

ill, but takes for granted I am well and happy. In fact mine is a mysterious state; I eat and sleep, look well, can do most things without fatigue, but all the time carry about this awful dragging weight on my mind. A quiet evening, and I slept well.

"A very touching and affectionate letter from Howard Sturgis, and another from Henry James. Yet they but serve as fuel to the flame of my sadness. I seem to have missed all the best things of life, by my miserable self-absorption and perverse indolence."

The months still dragged on in unhappiness, and when he returned to Cambridge for the Michaelmas term, his mood was as dark as it had ever been. In October he opened a fresh volume of his record with some messages of gratitude to his friends, "as this will be, I cannot help thinking, the last volume I shall ever complete of my diary." Within a month the change had begun. At the end of the year he spent some days at Tenby, with Ainger and Mr. and Mrs. Edmund Gosse, and he was then able to admit, to them and to himself, that he was well. Some sixty or seventy volumes of his diary were still to be completed, before it was finally closed.

VIII

1910

And so, with joy and energy redoubled, he took up all the activities of his life again at the point where they had been interrupted by his illness; he gathered the threads together without losing another moment, and was immediately as deep in his various occupations, as busy and harried and hustled as he had ever been and as he loved to be. His diary through it all is still copious; but it becomes from this time forward increasingly difficult to give an adequate picture of his days by means of selection and quotation from the row of grey volumes. Discretion, no doubt, begins to hold the editor's hand more pressingly; though as to that, and to the nature of Arthur Benson's freedom of criticism in his diary (which by this time was kept in much greater privacy than of old), there will be more to say on a later page. But the hastiness, the breathlessness of the pace at which it was always written, with many a scene of interest too slightly and summarily touched on for effect; and the large space occupied, naturally enough, by local affairs, college business, academic transactions, from which the freshness of their importance has long departed; and the inevitable repetitions, day by day, in the record of a life so straitly confined to its regular round: all this must mean that his later work at Cambridge, during the years when it was at its height of felicity and success, can only in part be illustrated from his own pages. And for that reason some brief account of the tenor of his

life at Magdalene—which was hardly to be changed henceforward, while he kept his health—may be given in this place.

The Old Lodge, when he took possession of it, was a modest, some might have said an inconvenient and a cheerless dwelling, with its unsunned rooms and shrubbery-smothered windows, shaken to its foundations every hour by the omnibus that thundered down the narrow street. But to Arthur Benson his own belongings were always admirable, and the Old Lodge pleased him from the first as a " stately little mansion " —his favourite phrase for any house that took his fancy. He proceeded to embellish and enlarge it in accordance with his highly eclectic taste. He was able before long to acquire some adjoining tenements, and with much ingenuity in adapting, contriving, adjusting, he finally produced a house for which he claimed, not unreasonably, a surpassing merit. It was at any rate a house that could have been devised, and perhaps inhabited, by none but himself. It had a great room like a college hall, with a gallery and a high-table; it had a tiny cloister-court, choked to the throat by a jungle of giant-hemlocks; it had an outlying congeries of small sitting-rooms, largely unvisited; it had a walled patch of garden, in which there were no flowers, only a grove of sycamores and a thorn-thicket. His own rooms were on the ground floor, facing the north, with a mass of lank dank bushes pressing almost against the window-panes. The inner decoration of the house was not less original than its design. He took a lively pleasure in its appointment and adornment, he invented and directed every detail; he filled the whole of the available space with a singular display of personal relics, scraps, mementoes of his past, the accumulation of many years; and he surveyed it all, when it was finished, with amusement, with complacency—and also, lastly and chiefly, with complete indifference. His possessions, well as he liked them, warmly as he commended them, had in fact no hold on him whatever.

The visitor, entering his crowded and book-lined little study, found him seated in an armchair by the window, a writing-board on his knees, hurling his letters as he finished them into the post-tray by his side. Here, unless business called him forth, he spent the morning. A colleague might drop in to ask a question, an undergraduate would appear with an essay to be read and criticised, or perhaps a casual caller, little suspecting how he would presently be chastised in the diary, might present himself unannounced; but the master of the house remained in his armchair, falling again upon his correspondence after each interruption, never pausing or hesitating, covering page after page with his free and agile script. Nothing could persuade him to reduce this daily labour, a great part of which was purely gratuitous, required of him neither by friendship nor by duty. For when he had written gay and talkative effusions to several friends, replied in generous measure to a dozen unknown admirers, despatched all the business entailed by his multifarious occupations; when he had answered all the answers to previous letters of his own; when he had lavished his best on friendly testimonials, recommendations for preferment, offices of all manner of kindness (he was unwearied in these things, and admirable in tact and wisdom); still he would bethink him of yet other calls, other openings for more letters that might and should be written, and that *were* written there and then—so impossible he found it to detect a reason for writing and not to write. More than once he tried to learn how to use the services of a secretary, but in vain—he liked the use of his own hand too well. Wherever he went, through all his so-called holidays, he carried the chain of his correspondence with him; he would never admit that he hugged it with enjoyment, but that was the fact.

At one o'clock, still writing for dear life, he was surprised by his luncheon-party. This was an event of the utmost regularity. On every day, very nearly, of the term, throughout the years of his residence at

Magdalene, two or three undergraduates of the college were bidden to lunch; all had their turn, all were plied with his sociable genial unfailing talk; and the record of the diary—in which the manner and habit of his guests is perpetually noted—is there to prove how seldom they were plied in vain. The young men were most friendly, most conversable, most delightful; their host has said so innumerable times, and it is easy to believe him. Few people, young or old, ever left Arthur Benson's table without a modest consciousness of having been a little more delightful than usual. In this way he made at least the acquaintance of every undergraduate who passed through Magdalene in his time, and a real friendship with very many; and since the college was now, under Donaldson's reign, steadily and rapidly growing in numbers, it was not a light task to keep abreast with the stream of newcomers. His pleasure in it was increased by discovering a special young friend and companion among them from time to time; one who was both to him in these years, George Mallory, has been seen already, and others will be encountered before long. It was naturally Magdalene that occupied him first, but his circle was always widening, and chosen spirits from other colleges often appeared in it.

The party knew better than to linger when the hour was over. Whatever the season or the weather, in the dust or in the mire, in the blaze or in the blast, their host must be off at the appointed moment for air and exercise upon the road. He took a friend with him or he went alone, he walked or he bicycled; in any case the excursion must exactly fill the afternoon. If the east wind blows and it begins to rain miserably, and you happen to be near home at half past three, still you must turn away and take a further round, or you will find yourself indoors before tea-time. If it is a perfect evening of summer, and the shadows are falling cool and fragrant between the hedges after the glaring day, still you must leave them and hurry home, for at half past four he must be sitting down to write his

chapter. These rules were absolute; his companion might raise a cry for a little more or a little less, but never with any hope that the concession would be granted. In due course he is seated in his dark little room, his back turned to the radiance of the evening, the golden light upon the college lawns, the glow on the old mellow roofs and turrets above the orchard by the river; and of just such a scene, very likely, he is writing a page of charming description, but the whole summer passes without once tempting him forth to see it with his eyes. Cambridge or the depths of the country, term or vacation, it was all one. He had the deepest and truest delight in all the beauty of nature, for just two hours of the afternoon; he could seldom be persuaded at any other time to give it a glance.

Meanwhile the pencil was racing from page to page, the sheets were accumulating. At the last possible moment before the dinner-hour they were bundled together, crammed into an envelope and despatched to the typist. If he had left himself five minutes in which to make his toilet, he was ready in time to sit down at his organ and improvise a slow sweet dirge-like strain before the college-bell rang out. Then in his great bellying silk gown he stepped forth, passed through the court—(tall and immense in his great gown, rubbing his clasped hands together, breathing gustily, his head bent forward as he moves with that curious pad-footed prowling walk, as though he were threading a jungle)—he crossed the college-court, smiling a greeting at a cluster of undergraduates, and arrived, a little late, to take his place at the high-table in hall. And then after dinner there was a session of the company in the panelled combination-room upstairs; and over port-wine and coffee, a pinch of snuff and a cigarette, there was an hour of the best of his talk—not over-serious, not tyrannous, never local or professional—the perfection of conversation after a comfortable dinner. But he had had enough of it when the party broke up; and then he liked to go

home and work a little in solitude, even read a little—though in general he read books only in bed, during his frequent wakeful nights, devouring a volume or two till sleep returned. Lastly, to close the best kind of day at a late hour, a friend or two should drop in for a game of cards.

That was the day he preferred, the typical day; and save that he constantly dined out, in other colleges and at many a house of friends, it was a day that he had enjoyed repeatedly since his settlement at Cambridge. He enjoyed the like of it as often as he might to the end. But as it now became known that he was in health and at work again, his engagements outside the college began to increase rapidly. He took or resumed his place on several educational committees and boards in Cambridge town and county, and his week was once more sprinkled with meetings faithfully attended. Before his illness he had already been nominated a Governor of Gresham School at Holt, in Norfolk; and this appointment was the beginning of his long and close association with the City Company of Fishmongers, by whom the school is maintained. Within a year of his recovery he was elected to the Court of the Company, much to his gratification, and thenceforward a "Fishmonger day" in London was a very regular and frequent occurrence. And now, as before, invitations to lecture, give addresses, distribute prizes, came to him from all parts of the country, and were freely accepted. His pleasure in all these activities was doubled and trebled as he discovered that he could undertake them as easily as ever.

Above all he was delighted to resume, with zest undiminished, his many schemes for the adornment and benefit of Magdalene; whether by a gift of portraits for the gallery, hangings for the chapel, armorial windows for the hall and the like—or less conspicuously, by help conveyed to undergraduates, in the form of unofficial scholarships and bursaries, to the advantage of themselves and the college. For such purposes his hand was always open, and he was not only

lavish, he was ingenious and versatile in generosity. He was proud of Magdalene's waxing renown in the university and the public schools—proud, too, of the harmony and concord of the college within; to both he contributed with all his influence. And here let the members of the society of Magdalene in those years be named by name in order. The Master, Stuart Donaldson, we already know; and next to him came the President, Mr. A. G. Peskett, and to him the Bursar, Mr. A. S. Ramsey. The Fellows next in seniority were Mr. S. Vernon Jones, Benson himself, Professor Nuttall, and Mr. T. Peel. Mr. Stephen Gaselee, Pepysian Librarian, and Mr. F. R. Salter completed the list; and where all were Arthur Benson's friends, it may be said that the last two especially were close in his company and intimacy in these and all the later years. This was the "domus," the fellowship and ruling body of the college. The dinner-parties in hall were augmented by other associates, "members of the high-table"; among whom Father P. N. Waggett, resident at this time in Cambridge, should in particular be mentioned as a frequent and welcome presence in the grey volumes.

One other friend must be named, and his name set here in a line by itself: Jesse Hunting, who with his wife had entered Arthur Benson's service when he settled at Cambridge in 1904—who never left him, never failed him in devoted and untiring attention, and was with him at the end. There was no firmer tie of friendship than this in Benson's life; he trusted and honoured and relied on Hunting from the first day to the last of their long association. No one who remembers the Old Lodge can ever think of it without joining gratefully in the admiration and affection that its master felt for this man.

So much for Magdalene and the term. The vacations were yet more regular in their sameness year by year, for scarcely a variation was ever made from the now established round. Hinton had been abandoned when he fell ill. He now went from Cambridge to

Tremans; from Tremans to the "Lamb" or the "King's Arms" or the "Feathers," where he has so often been seen already; from thence to his cousins at Skelwithfold by Windermere; and from thence again to Cambridge. The order of these movements might be changed, but nothing else. It was the rarest of events if he slept a night under another roof.

It only remains to be said that in 1910 he published *The Silent Isle*—sketches of the fen-country, which he had written at Hinton—and was engaged on the biographical studies which appeared in the following year as *The Leaves of the Tree*. He also wrote and delivered at Magdalene the lectures afterwards published in the volume called *Ruskin: a Study in Personality*.

"*January* 24, 1910.—A letter from Gosse, deploring his idleness; he is entirely silent as to my own illness. Maurice Baring went off; it has been delightful to have him here. I felt well and cheerful. Snow fell. Hore came with me to Wimpole, and we walked in the frozen avenues; a funeral at the church. He entertained me with ingenuous talk about the college—a charming boy.

"Then I wrote; and went to a musical committee at King's. . . . Then went off with S.A.D. to dine with Waggett. He has taken the pretty old house at Newnham, once Harry Goodhart's, and has an assemblage of young High Church men there. It is a quaint house; he has a chapel, with a fine Sassoferrato, and an oratory with nice Sienese pictures. His own room full of books, deal tables, crucifixes. I am told he is rather inclined to break down in nerves. There was a big gathering, rather obscure young clerics, and laymen, with that odd, bright, ecclesiastical smile which means so little. A huge party at dinner. . . . I liked the old ecclesiastical feeling—it reminded me of Truro—the mild and godly mirth, the general submissiveness of tone. I know exactly what to do and say. . . .

"Then we adjourned to a little bare room, and pious undergraduates came in. Father —— made a long rambling speech about a mission somewhere. The two things he said were important were: (1) to conciliate the natives; (2) to hold one's own against other denominations. That was a Christian programme. Waggett spoke very well, dwelling on the almost Greek beauty of the Kaffirs, and their primitive joy in church things. A long story, called a 'very sad' one, was told of a young chief excommunicated for polygamy. I felt a mixture of admiration, bewilderment and hopeless disgust at the frame of mind of these missionaries. But it was an interesting evening. I should not like much of it, but a little gives me back the old days, and the air of religion."

"*May* 20.— The day quite lovely. The papers are now absolutely unreadable, one idiotic gush of false sentiment and fatuous panegyric.* One hunts through for a few words of sense or fact, and reads an obituary notice of someone else with relief. . . . What a proof it all is that we don't any of us really believe in personal immortality. If we did, all this ghastly humbug, which must be as distasteful to the poor man, if he *is* conscious, as it is to me, would be impossible. With what face should we meet the dear ones about whom we had lied so effusively and gushed so hypocritically? It is all very disgusting.

"The place is quiet; half the college has gone to the funeral. The garden is delicious, especially the great burst of speedwell, just where the path under the bastion turns up to the arbour. That is the 'liquid heavens upbreaking' if you like—not hyacinths. The whole of that bank, deep in grass, colour inextricably intertwined, is beautiful beyond words—the mass, the variety, the richness, the sweetness of it all. How one has the heart to paint or write, I don't know. . . .

"I can forgive to-day its heat for being so golden-sweet, so summer-scented. In the afternoon we motored out to Harlton, through fragrant air, the fields golden

* Death of King Edward VII.

with buttercups. Everything has come out with a wild rush of leaf and bloom. Here we left the car and struck up from Eversden by the old clunch-pit into the Mareway. The landscape deliciously hazy; the Mareway itself held the rain of yesterday in its oozy ruts, and we mainly walked in breezy fields to left and right, with lovely silent views of wide champaign country, and by the corners of secluded woods. Then down through Wimpole and along the great avenue. P. entertained me much by sketches of Anglo-Venetian life. . . .

"The great house blinked down the vast avenue, and we walked among cowslips and meadow-grass. It is a holiday to-day, and the roads are full of tall-hatted rustics and girls in mourning, enjoying themselves with infinite solemnity.

"We got back late; and I had a note from Cooke to say he would bring a dentist at 6.0. A young, shy, pleasant man appeared, and produced probes and a horrid forceps. . . . Five useless attempts, and each attempt was more painful—but wholesome pain, not sickening, nasty pain like dressing a wound. At last the vile claw got hold. . . . I really think that Cooke suffered more than I did. I smoked cigarettes and wrote contentedly at my Ruskin, dining alone, while P. went out. It is an odd combination of nerve and no nerve. I am naturally very timid and sensitive, but I don't really think I feel much pain; and I didn't really mind being escorted to my bedroom by the torturers. But it is very hard to see the point of all this petty and undignified pain; I am a ludicrous object, I don't learn any patience or courage, my pleasant work is interrupted. On the other hand I am sustained by a quite unreasonable cheerfulness and enjoyment of life. I don't see the bearing of it all on what is or may be. . . ."

"*May* 28.—I had arranged to go out with M.R.J., but P.L. and Oliffe Richmond ousted me, and they arranged to start early and return late. I was rather vexed; they don't see how rude it is, nor does Monty.

When I remonstrated, they only said gleefully, 'You wouldn't fall in with any of the arrangements.' I wrote and taught. Then walked with Mallory across the fen from Upware to Swaffham; very beautiful, but grey and clouded. I tried to explain to Mallory that all poets are really saying the same thing; the style, the metre, the subject, don't matter—it is the wonder of things beautiful they express. He would not see it and disputed it flatly.

"I wrote an account of Roosevelt for the College Magazine. Then we got Rupert Brooke to come to dine. He was very handsome and very charming, and talked away freely. The beloved Salter also came, and made us all cheerful."

"*May* 29.—I hate Sunday; there is a constraint about it, and it is too desperately sociable for my taste. I played the organ in chapel with some pleasure. Rendall of Winchester* preached, a long, vague sermon, full of points, badly and stiffly delivered. He said that Pharisaism did not exist among undergraduates! It is rampant. At no age do men judge so harshly or disapprove so unreasonably or are so complacent about themselves. He said too that it was a shame that the fine old word 'sport' should be so much vitiated by money transactions—'How unlike the Sermon on the Mount'—as if Christ approved of horse-racing and disapproved of betting! Both alike are entirely contrary to Christ's spirit. . . ."

"*Norwich, June* 5.—I resisted Ainger's suggestion to have a walk before Cathedral. We went to service, and were given stalls. The cathedral choir dark and dank and airless, and curiously lacking in any sense of ecclesiastical tradition. . . . The Dean looked jolly enough, but he had a wandering and restless eye, in search of distraction. A feeble hon. canon by him, who had a tendency, in procession, to wander off up gangways, and was much poked and pulled by the Dean . . . It was pretty before service began to see two little blue-

* Dr. M. J. Rendall, Headmaster of Winchester.

cassocked choir-boys in the Dean's stall, finding his places. The usual collection of dreary and pompous old fogies, retired parsons, tradesmen, lawyers, in the stalls, snuffling and screeching. The sermon most dreary; —— had a voice like Nixon, and preached on religious persecution, which he seemed to wish could be restored as a guiding force (text: 'Compel them to come in.') He said with joy that St. Augustine recommended the use of the civil power to punish faithless or heretic Christians. His argument was that the heathen were wrong to persecute Christians, because the Christians were right and the heathen were wrong; but the Christians, being right, would do well to persecute the heathen, though he deprecated excessive torture. It was a dreadful performance, emanating from a mind in prison. . . .

"Then the indefatigable Ainger walked in the town. Then we went to the Palace; the approach to the gate grass-grown and ill-kept; no porter to answer the crazy bell. (Such a fine gatehouse, with a figure in a niche.) The garden very sweet, with its great trees and sunny lawns, and the cathedral rising over. But it is a deplorable building, by Christian the architect—rubble flint with brick facings, like a great ugly hospital. The Bishop* strolled down to meet us, in a panama hat, looking very youthful, and glad to see us in a quiet, welcoming self-possessed way. The house in frantic disorder, the boards up for electric light; a great hole in the wall, in the hall, showing a fine crypt. No carpets or curtains, and the furniture piled up in the rooms. We lunched in a dirty little room—a good cold lunch, with a claret incredibly strong. . . . The Bishop talked a good deal about all sorts of things, sensibly and even humorously; but what I like best is his self-possession and unaffected kindness. He took us all over the house. The dining-room is awful, very large, like a restaurant—hideous, chocolate-washed walls, marble pillars, pitch-pine roof. No portraits to speak of. The drawing-room on the third floor, with some character. . . . A grand vaulted kitchen, with a

* Dr. Bertram Pollock Bishop of Norwich, formerly Master of Wellington College.

beautiful, red-haired kitchen-maid. The Bishop went to cathedral, attended by verger and chaplain and a pretty choir-boy to whom he talked delightfully as he went. Then we went for a dreary walk in the heat, along suburban roads. . . .

"I find myself rather longing for pomps and vanities, and more important work. But, after all, I am in Cambridge, with a lay canonry, teaching-work to do, a college to help and serve, time for writing, and with wealth in abundance. How mean to want more state and fuss!—and I know too how I should hate it. I have got exactly what I want, yet I am discontented.

"I came back tired, after a hard day of talk and entertainment. . . . A very bad and wakeful night of the worst kind."

"*Magdalene, June* 28.—Much bothered by callers. . . . Found Inge,* and walked with him down the river to Waterbeach. He was rather lively; much interested in the Divorce Commission. . . . It does really seem to me ridiculous to base legislation on a chance saying of Christ in the Gospel—not a dictum, but an answer to a question—and on another saying of St. Paul, which admits religious differences as a reason for divorce! What a hopeless nation we are for precedents! . . .

"Tea, and wrote. I am rather melancholy to-day, not disabled by it, but overshadowed. I seem to be very idle and self-centred, and to have no particular work. I see my contemporaries, one by one, taking up responsible work; and I have refused very responsible work, from a genuine diffidence, not unmingled, I suppose, with laziness and want of moral stamina. Now I seem firmly on the shelf. I have plenty to do, but it is all scrappy and feeble. . . . My easy and genteel philosophy does not help me much now. I *might* be offered this new Professorship.† If S.A.D. were promoted I *might* be

* Dr. W. R. Inge, Dean of St. Paul's, at this time Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity at Cambridge.

† The recently-founded King Edward VII Professorship of English Literature at Cambridge.

Master here. Either of these, I think, I could do. But I am sadly conscious of vagueness, cowardice, idleness, meanness, baseness, self-indulgence and other ugly things. I want the honour without the work. I have a very vulgar and shallow soul, but I don't see how to mend that. . . . Yet I have a faith both that it doth not yet appear what we shall be—and that the end is not yet.

"This evening I have been reading the life of William Morris, with envious admiration of a man who knew what he meant to do, and what he had to do, and did it. . . ."

"*Tremans, September* 20.—In the afternoon came Mrs. Cornish,* in her most expansive mood; every word as good as a play, with tremendous emphasis, and with an intense desire to do justice to interlocutors. But, alas, the shadow of age falls—she *cannot* attend. . . . Still she gives me a sense of intense appreciation of life, and of well-bred enthusiasm, which is very refreshing. . . ."

"*September* 21.—I had a long, vague stroll with Mrs. Cornish by the dove-cote and farm, in golden sun—she hobbling in little tight, high-heeled shoes. . . . She talked to me much about marriage—about Leslie Stephen, how he once took her hand and kissed it, when she put coals on his fire. 'All the things that women like and value he did by instinct,' she said. I was puzzled—I suppose a kind of *ritual* of worship? She said that it was possible for women to go on bearing a man charming children, and yet never to have a word of tenderness from him. She said that I made the mistake, like many clever men, of thinking marriage too transcendental a thing. 'It's not transcendental at all!'—and she told me the story of a Miss ——, who, when marriage was mentioned, cried out in a mixed party, 'I would marry any man who asked me.' But I fear it *would* be transcendental with me: [I mean] that I should so get to detest the ways and the physical presence of anyone with whom I lived—unless it were a simply negative clean comeliness—that I

* Mrs. F. W. Warre-Cornish, wife of the Vice-Provost of Eton.

should be obsessed by it, unless saved by a very high sort of passion.

"But it was very nice to have this talk. She is a clever, feeling, experienced woman; she arrays her thoughts a little—but it is all original and fine. I talked a little Socialism to her; she didn't understand. . . ."

"*Skelwithfold, September* 29.—P.L. wrote me an interesting letter about Robert Bridges, with whom he stayed. In compliment of this I read the Shorter Poems. They seem to me thinner than of old, with little more than an Elizabethan trick of language—but a pleasant trick! No criticism on life. How priggish that sounds—but it is what I want just now. Life seems to me *not* good enough just to go on with and dabble in from day to day, only interesting as leading on to something. I don't mean that life is boring; but it is so much less nice than it ought to be, and it is so easy to get tangled, that there must be some reason for it all—and that is what I want to get at. A person who is content with life is to me uninteresting, because it only means that he has not experienced life.

"I got off at 11.0, and to my joy found Spencer Lyttelton at the L.N.W.R.; we fared to Bletchley together. He imparted to me a great store of interesting and unimportant knowledge. . . . The time passed pleasantly, and perhaps the reason why I can't remember much of what S.L. said is because I talked so much myself. We arranged for a winter trip together, and parted with more than goodwill. He is now such a handsome, upright fellow—how can he dangle about as he does?

"Then followed a long, dull journey; changed at Preston and walked a mile on the vast platform; very dizzy. I read and reflected a good deal, but the train ran ill and *rolled*. So to Windermere by 7.12. A little carriage waiting—car broken down—and I drove through the soft warm night beside the lake, with the gleam of pale waters, dark headlands, moonrifts in inky cloud-banks, hills that moved slowly as we moved, tangled

constellations hanging in forest spaces, bright stars racing through tree-tops; the scent of the warm woodlands very sweet. . . ."

"*Magdalene, December* 7.—. . . I dined in Hall; it was noisy and dull. Roy Lubbock was there, Percy's brother, trying for a scholarship at King's; very like the rest of them, tall, pale, languid-looking, but a very quiet simple, nice friendly boy. I talked mostly to Salter. Then came a smoking-concert, not bad fun. I liked the look of hall, and all the neat jolly boys, with their funny ways; one was to walk round and to get everyone to sign programmes. There was a topical song, very heavy mirth. They made jokes about me of a harmless kind, but I couldn't raise a laugh. Undergraduates have a deep desire to *amuse*. I suppose it is that they want to impress. You can't *see* when people are seriously impressed, but you can see them laugh. But while they have a gift for being ingenious, their jokes are very heavy-handed, and generally entail discomfort for the victim. But there was an intense desire to do nothing unfriendly or wounding, and the whole thing was very amicable. . . . The great Winterbotham came up and sate by me a little and talked pleasantly; I am much drawn to this wholesome, handsome, natural creature. . . .

"What amuses me now is to find myself going to bed like a child, angry at being interrupted, full of gusto, longing for the morning and for the current of life to be renewed. I don't say that life is very *joyful*, but it is awfully interesting. . . .

"The one supreme happiness of my life just now is my friendship with several young men on *really* equal terms—Percy, Salter, Gaselee, Hugh Walpole, and some of the undergraduates. I can't say how wonderful this is to me. While I was at Eton I gradually drifted out of that—indeed rather made friends with my elders —and now I seem to have slipped into touch with these young men. I dare say it isn't as close as I think, but it is a great happiness to me."

"*Tremans, December* 24.—Many tiresome letters and endless presents of cards and nonsense from admirers and readers. Do I like all this rubbish? It gives me a sense, I suppose, of reaching out into humanity; but it also makes me feel that I am only a sentimentalist at best. These are the wrong people! If it were the young men who liked [my books] it would be different; but it is the maiden aunts, and the silly middle-aged men, and the foolish maidens. It is a sort of fame; but as Carlyle says, no one was ever anything but injured by popularity.

"I was hunted out of the drawing-room by callers and decorators; then hunted out of my own room as well. Christmas is a children's feast, and it seems rather silly for a grown-up household to be behaving so. The good Hunting went off to Cambridge. There is a *real* friend; he looks after me and cares for me and thinks for me as if I were his son. He never obtrudes himself, never gossips, never slanders. He is, I think, one of the very best men I have ever met. . . .

"I had a depressed waking to-day after very vivid and sad dreams. I spent a day with Winterbotham in London, knowing I bored him. I took him to half a dozen clubs, but could get no food or attention, and he was always making excuses to leave me. I am not well to-day, excitable and depressed by turns; I must try to rest a little—but inaction bores me. I wrote twenty-six letters this morning. . . .

"I walked alone; met Maycock—he was going to see a poor young man who is dying bravely of cancer. The sorrows of the world! And all I do to help is to write timid and chatty articles for maiden aunts. The day was warm and wet, with volleying winds and angry inky skies; very beautiful, with the wintry pastures and bare woods. There came a gleam of yellow light among the flying cloud-rack. I wish I knew what all this lavish beauty *meant;* it has such a hold on me, but I can't interpret it.

"Since tea rather depressed again. The life here does not really suit me. But how can I keep quiet? The

brain spins like a top; one writes, talks, writes again; and even as I walk alone I dream a hundred dreams and spin fancies. . . . Read Carlyle half the evening and felt ashamed of my mild dilettante outlook on men and things."

IX

1911

There is little to be said of the next year, save that it was still busier, still happier and more prosperous than the last. Even to himself it was clear by this time that he had no real inclination towards a life of literary retirement, and he seized all opportunities of extending the range of his work. He easily found enough and to spare. And yet he was sometimes troubled to think that with a dozen avocations he laboured to no great purpose after all, wanting a single task that satisfied him; for the solid and valuable work that he was accomplishing at Magdalene was all an interest and a pleasure, and he could never regard it as a professional duty. Outside the college, in Cambridge and elsewhere, he had desultory employment in plenty; but he began to wish for the chance to take a hand in the affairs and councils of the University itself, to which he had hardly penetrated as yet. It pleased him accordingly when in this year he was appointed a member of the syndicate controlling the University Press. He was thus brought into closer touch than hitherto with the academic polity, much to his satisfaction; but though he soon found himself engaged and interested, he was a newcomer to the business of university government, and his work in this direction never proceeded very far. An unprofessional figure in Cambridge life he remained to the end; and no doubt he was not the less useful for that, but it meant that Cambridge, outside Magdalene, did not provide him with the one

absorbing task he needed. That, after leaving Eton, he never had again, at any rate until he became Master of his college.

The only book he wrote, or finished, in this year was the fantasy called *The Child of the Dawn*. He gave a course of lectures on English fiction at the Royal Society of Literature, and another on Carlyle at Magdalene, but these were not published.

"*Walton Park Hotel, Clevedon, January* 11, 1911.—We set off at 11.15 in a great scurry. . . . The country very beautiful, pale-green meadows, leafless brown trees, blue hills. A great motor met me at the station [Wells], and we rolled up in state through the quaint street, over the moat, up to the Palace. . . . Really it is a most romantic house, with its lawns and trees, its walls and moats. We went to see the Wells, where the clear green water comes volleying up through the sand. The Mendips behind all embower the view wonderfully. Then through the Cathedral and Vicars' Close, George conducting us.

"Then to the Deanery. . . . It's a wonderful house—a fine saloon with carved columns—many great rooms. The back is simply delicious, with oriels and parapets, a perfect great fifteenth-century house. The new Dean is going to make a chapel out of what was once, I think, the hall or gallery, destroying some later inserted bedrooms. The garden is big, but without charm. For many years of my life I should have thought that to be Dean of Wells would be like heaven; but now I found myself without the least touch of envy. It is a sham affair, pomposity without dignity, state without power. A great writer might be something here, but there is no audience for sermons, and the life must be petty and deplorable. It *means* nothing. It is the sort of place for an old wearied and courteous bishop, who had done his work, to repose in. But these enchanting houses are not fit homes for mortals. One wants untroubled youth and vigour and love and art to make them radiant. They are too good for old, timid and conventional Christians.

I should like to have given such a house to William Morris in his youth. . . ."

"*Magdalene, January* 16.—Dressed (at four o'clock!) and went up to town. To the Athenæum. . . . I dined alone in state, and wrote a little at my lecture; seized with abject nervousness; but drove to City Temple, by Plum Tree Court. A big crowd, and I was refused admittance till I said I was the lecturer. A very obliging young secretary took me up to a horrid little room with a hot fire and plush chairs. Here I found R. J. Campbell—a nice, simple, bourgeois man, rather handsome, but rather marred; white hair and big eyes. . . . Then I stepped with him to the scaffold. The room was *packed*, all the gangways full of people standing—perhaps 800—they had turned many away. Such rows of friendly and kindly faces. I plunged into my lecture and read distinctly; then took a rest of five minutes in the middle, while they gave out the notices. I asked Campbell *who* they all were; he hardly knew—clerks, tradesmen, doctors, teachers, their wives and daughters—none of them residing there, all coming in by train.

"The whole lecture took an hour and a half. A few little speeches; and then I made a tiny speech about dons in reply. It all gave me an impression of great and sincere friendliness and goodwill. The lecture was dull, but the socialist part was loudly applauded in one corner. Then a little supper—my voice had lasted well—and out by Campbell's private stair. But there was a crowd in the street waiting to see me go, with hats off, wanting to shake hands; some young ladies came on the steps of the car and shook hands; quite a new experience for me!

"Much bored in the train, but was home by midnight; slept ill."

"*January* 17.—I have been thinking over my City Temple experience. It is odd to have really met, face to face, the people who read my books and love them—who think them original and high-minded and sincere and beautiful—who like the donnish and the aristocratic

flavour, the flavour picked up in episcopal palaces and county society and Eton and Cambridge—and believe they have really found the charm of culture. It is humiliating in a sense, because I don't think it is a critical or an intellectual audience; but it is there, and its real and urgent goodwill is there. That remains with me—the sense of having fallen among friends.

"*January* 23.—A very warm letter from Herbert Stephen about my article on J.K.S.* He says that he thinks we differ about as extensively as two 'creditable' men can—this fact he says is emphasised by his having read *The Silent Isle*—but he adds that he is well content to let my article stand as the *locus classicus* for Jim, and he congratulates me on its extraordinary vividness and accuracy. This is a great relief and a great pleasure. I had feared dimly that I might have pained some of the Stephens.

"But it also makes me feel that this sort of reminiscence is what I can do best. I have a close observation and a photographic eye—but it is very little pleasure indeed to do it. It seems to me the sort of thing that anyone can do or ought to be able to do; I want to criticise life, not to photograph it.

"Went off with three undergraduates to shoot. We had a nice quiet day, in mist and mire, among leafless trees and wide, bare fields. We shot a few partridges; I shot very few cartridges, and not well at that; but I enjoyed the long lingering by hedgerow-ends, and the sense of the continuity of field-life, so much older and sweeter than Cambridge intrigues. . . ."

"*Lamb Hotel, Burford, March* 29.—Worked feebly at letters and diary. It was dull and cold, with a grey light. We went off after lunch to Fairford, packed tight in the car, very sleepy, through dull country; one pretty village we passed, called either Filkins or Broughton Poggs, we could not determine which. To Lechlade: I remembered well my day with Tatham there, when we

* J. K. Stephen, in *The Leaves of the Tree.*

went to Kelmscott, a day of enduring joy to me; I remembered so well a little stone pavilion, at the edge of a wood. We were soon at Fairford, but it was all dull; I never, I think, saw a place of which the beauty so much depends on the sun—the soft orange stone was all blurred. We went in and looked round the windows; they are certainly very beautiful, with their rich aged colours, and the patient ugly faces of the saints are worth a thousand of Kempe's wide-eyed courtly persons; but I don't think they would have been worth much when new. I liked best a Fall, with rich green trees, and a lovely little bit of wide homely landscape, delicately drawn in a blue light. Much bored by a courteous verger, who explained the windows so that I could not listen to him or look at them—like many lecturers. Then we walked cheerfully to Quenington, discussing the horrors of country-house life, Winterbotham defending them; and Salter gave us a view of his political principles. . . . Quenington a sweet place of old houses and gliding waters, with pretty pavilions by the stream: a church with rude Norman doors. We were soon at Coln St. Aldwyn; we went to the church; W. and I walked round, peeped into the manor garden, where Lord St. A. lives, and saw the pretty grass terraces and the steep little park: then packed into the car and went quickly home.

"I do like my fresh and simple-minded companions, who speak their minds so freely and ingenuously and do not treat me with any dull respect, though with plenty of consideration. Wrote, and dined, with cards and pretty talk till midnight. I am indeed happy here. . . .

"W. said to me that I didn't talk enough about my books, and he couldn't make out if I was really interested in them. I ought to be, he added graciously."

"*Magdalene, May* 4.—A slightly better account of Beth, but the end is not far off. Hugh is there. . . . I taught all the morning; then lunched with Smith—rather dull—and motored with Salter and Winterbotham

to the oxlip wood—a different thing from Burford! W. was tired, I think, I was oppressed with care, and S. was a little pragmatical; he lectured me severely about not dining in hall! . . .

"I wrote a little, dined alone, and read a paper to a mixed society of blacks and whites (East and West) at Fitzwilliam Hall. It is a well-meant plan to have a mixed social club; but friendliness which springs from a sense of duty and not from personal liking is rather a priggish thing, and it is hard to eliminate a sense of patronage from it. The bright-eyed Indians, with their dusky faces and unintelligible English, were very friendly, and the paper (Charles Kingsley) was well received."

"*May* 5.—A better account of Beth, but a wire came to say that all was over.* I hardly know what I feel—a sort of dull ache of sorrow, at the thought of losing the one person of whose love I first was consciously aware, and the one person whom I have myself loved in a sort of instinctive way all my days. I think of all her endless little gifts and kindnesses, and the entirely uncritical sweetness of her love. It has been an extraordinarily beautiful, happy and useful life; just spent in service which she enjoyed, and among those whom she loved. I could not wish to keep her in the dim life she was living, and yet I can't bear to think she is gone. . . .

"I have had a dull and dreary feeling all day, and there seems no joy anywhere; though the world was as sweet as ever—the sun on the leads of Ely as white as snow, and all the fruit-trees loaded with white blossom."

"*May* 9.—I taught, and scribbled hard at arrears; some men to lunch. Lapsley came, and we biked, very gingerly, round by Horningsea; he was nice and gentle. Then I went out again, a rather lesser round, as L. had to

* Elizabeth Cooper ("Beth") died at the age of 93, after 78 years of devoted service with Mrs. Benson and her family.

go home to tea; and was altogether more cheerful. What *is* one meant to do, I wonder, by the Mind that made us? To grieve or not to grieve, to enjoy or not to enjoy? One does and will do, no doubt, whatever one is meant to do; but which way ought one to *try* to go—crush grief out, let it fade, keep it fresh, meditate over it? These things are dark.

"I dined in hall. Mr. Pfungst, the wine-merchant and art-collector, was there—very courteous, rather interesting, extremely deaf. . . . He talked politics—anti-radical; and R. answered him with a shocking calmness, as a widower might answer jests about his dead wife, every now and then asking some high loud sectarian question which Mr. Pf. didn't hear. I resigned myself to listening. R. made an attack on monasticism—about their useless and trivial selfishness. Now when Hugh talks about monks I want to turn all monks adrift, with a horsewhip laid on their backs, and to burn down the monkeries. But when R. so talks I see he doesn't understand the thing at all, and despises it; and then I think monasticism the one thing worth preserving, as a bulwark against contemptuous virtue and complacent common-sense."

"*June* 2.—Out to dine with the Marcus Dimsdales, which turned out a delightful party. They have added and added to their house, till it looks like a village street. But the garden on the hill-top, with its wide view, is delicious, and they have built a nice open-air sort of school-room for the children. . . . Jane Harrison was there; she is a pleasant woman and can sustain a conversation. There was also a Miss Balfour, whom I met at Aunt Nora's, such a pretty and charming girl. I felt that if I were young and wise I would like to have tried to make friends; but I was heavy and elderly, and when I spoke of 'Aunt Nora' she looked at me with amazement. Walter Raleigh* was there, most interesting and delightful. He is full of zest and humour, and is a real talker, darting and gliding on, picking up

* Sir Walter Raleigh, Professor of English Literature at Oxford, died in 1922.

other peoples contributions, giving them a deft twirl, and weaving a sort of pretty flower chain. . . . I came away after an evening of real and rational enjoyment, feeling that one had said what one thought, and heard other people's thoughts, not mere chatter smeared into gaps of boredom."

"*Tremans, June* 7.—I wrote at my letters, but they accumulate fast. Went off about 12.0, and motored through heat and fine country to Lancing. The little woods, the thickly-grassed fields and the downs rising over all made a delicious picture. Bowlby* received us, and Mrs. Bowlby, and gave us lunch. His is a fine house with much modern culture, suggesting Browning and Florentine pictures; Luxmoore's old William Morris carpet was the finest thing in the house, I thought. Then we went all round. The great church is roofed and floored, but it wants an immense sum for woodwork and colour; it is hard and cold—it ought to be rich and dim; the green windows, seen from a distance, are displeasing. We looked into science-rooms, class-rooms, halls, all ever so much more finished and furnished than when I visited it before. An air of prosperity everywhere; the boys smart and well-mannered. . . . The view was splendid; the downs, the river, the red roofs and old towers of Shoreham, the estuary and the line of blue sea, with the vague smoke and streets of Brighton laid out beyond, made a delightful picture. . . .

"I could not help envying Bowlby a little; such a fine life, to rule a healthy community, and try to secure a good active healthy boyhood for these jolly creatures—and to try to put something bigger into their minds. I could not rule such a place; I haven't enough serenity or good humour or patience; yet I think I have many gifts for it. I am more at home with undergraduates and time for writing, and I wouldn't change my life; the thing is not as bright as it looked to-day; there are

* Canon H. T. Bowlby, formerly assistant master at Eton, Headmaster of Lancing College, 1909-25.

anxieties, squabbles, wearinesses, no doubt—and fears too. But it is a fine and a beautiful work. . . .

"We met a lot of Territorials coming back, riding and clattering in the dust, very healthy and jolly. I got back tired, and had a very bad wakeful night of the worst kind. These days without exercise don't suit me at all."

"*Skelwithfold, June* 22*.—Hopeless rain and volleying wind; but in this astonishing climate it cleared somehow, and when Annie and I walked down to Brathay the grass was dry again. I went on up the valley with Dingo, and round by the Coniston Road. A great dog rushed out of a farm-house at Dingo. I threw a stone at him, and Dingo ambled beside me with an obvious smile, appearing to say, 'We are well out of that! The stone was a good idea.'

"Then I came in to a solitary tea and proofs. I do find the climate here very unpleasant; I am sleepy, lazy, greedy; I can hardly put one foot before another. But I like the quiet of this house and the easy ways and the affection which surrounds me. A. came back very tired from the sports about 7.30: advised me not to dress. Cordelia arrived about 8.15 in rather a peremptory mood, determined to have the bonfire and be damned. So after dinner at 10 o'clock, in heavy rain, I walked with her in cloak and strong shoes, carrying boxes, to a little eminence among the woods below the house. The bonfire was an immense pile, 250 loads of faggots; we sent off a rocket or two, and then lighted the thing. Meanwhile, through the misty air, we could see a faint bonfire like a star on High Close; and the top of Loughrigg looked like a volcano.

"The bonfire was grand—so *liquid*, both in sound and sight. There came a time when fire *flowed* into the air like an upward-darting cataract. It lit up the trees and the faces of the crowd in a very theatrical manner; and the heat was tremendous, so that standing afar off my cloak smoked. There was one great fall

* King George V's coronation day.

of material, and a pillar of smoke and fire raged out; but it hypnotised everyone—the crowd stood gazing, silent. Then we sent off a few more squibs and things, and when the fire was nothing but a red and grey mountain of embers went back about midnight. The crowd cheered A. with a will."

"*July* 3.—Rose earlier; and we all went off together in the car to catch the 10.15 at Windermere. . . .

"*Rule* 43: *Never travel with women.* We had an engaged compartment, which was comfortable; but OH the fuss about luggage and wraps. A. and C. had on a moderate computation eighteen packages. Then there was a tyre, a box containing china, a kettle in a sack, a box with some cheese in it. These were all piled up in our compartment—some of them handed out at Kendal. It was a pleasant journey though; the train was a huge one, and it seemed to be just abandoned at stations by all concerned—stood idly waiting until it occurred to some official to try if he could start it.

"I read *Endymion*—and indeed the whole of Keats except *Otho*. I do wish with all my heart that in a popular edition they would not print his wretched impromptu rubbish, much of it so caddish and vulgar; it is interesting *only* to the artist, as an unfinished sketch or study, while it makes the ordinary person think it all equally good. It is curious to trace in Keats the germ of so much in William Morris and Tennyson too. The bream keeping head against the freshet is exactly W.M., and much of *Hyperion* is Tennyson. On the other hand much of Keats is pure Milton.

"I changed at Bletchley and said good-bye to the beloved women. A hot train received me. The only relief—I was very tired and sleepy—was the look of the green, warm river-water at Bedford, reed-fringed, weed-grown, in the quiet hay-fields. . . .

"I had a dream last night so horribly vivid that I am sure my brain was unduly fevered. . . . It began with my being with Jones in a field, and seeing an odd thing rise out of the earth. On looking close, it was two

snakes, curiously intertwined. They were poisonous snakes, and I tried to kill one with a stick; but soon after found they had disappeared in a hole. I got a spade and dug, and presently much earth fell in and showed a rocky cleft with a pool in which snakes were swimming about. I went to a shop—by this time the field was become a little bare hill, standing out among houses, very interesting and quaint, in odd little streets and squares—and bought some petrol, with the idea of getting a light to spear the snakes; but I spilt the tin in the cave, and it was somehow kindled and drove us out by burning fiercely. Then King Edward VII appeared, very genial, to ask why smoke was coming out of the hill; I explained, and he said it would be all right if it didn't spread. But on walking round the little town I saw that streams of fire were running out of the hill, dripping down, and half-a-dozen houses were alight. I roused the inmates; and then followed a time of agony while the fires were got under and I patrolled the base of the hill waiting for more streams to break out. I woke in great discomfort of mind and body: read a long time and didn't get to sleep till 4.0."

"*Magdalene*, *July* 8.—The heat insupportable. I sate all the morning; the portrait improves.* . . . Biked alone round Horningsea: had some talk to my little gatekeeper at Clayhithe. Then along by the river; in this heat all decency goes to the winds—there were people bathing frankly all along—but it was very nice and summery, and gave a sense of holiday and golden age. What a pretty thing the human body is! I saw a fine radiant boy come out of the water, looking like a little god: in five minutes he was clothed and shouting, a horrible cad! Then I wrote an article on Oratory. It has been a happy day. In the evening sate out for an hour in the dusk, with Salter and Maitland. The electric works throbbed, and a large orange moon went slowly down over the Pepys building. Vague scents wandered, obscure sounds thrilled in the twilight.

* This portrait, by Mr. A. Fuller Maitland, is now at Magdalene.

Then some talk with M.; and to bed, but could not sleep; read most of J. A. Symonds's life—a horrible tortured affair, which *vexes* me more the oftener I read it. . . .

"I worked out my last year's income yesterday, which was better than I had hoped. It came to £3,660. Of this I seem to have spent £2,100—how, I can't imagine—invested about £700, and given about £800 to decorating the college in various ways. What I don't like is the fact that I spend so much on myself; and yet I live simply enough. I have also carefully analysed my private income, apart from teaching and writing; it comes to about £1,700. . . . One ought not to need more, but I want to have a lot to give away."

"*July* 14.—At 8.0 to the —— dinner—about twenty guests, most of them, it turned out, about my age. . . . Afterwards talked to various men, civil, sentimental, pleased. It gave me rather a horrible sensation. Many of them were obviously drunk, and the awful stupidity of the talk! I really felt myself to be cleverer than some of the guests. Several people asked to be introduced to me, said they wished to make my acquaintance, and then talked *continuously*. One man asked me for a photograph, for his wife—said he didn't himself care about such things. But it seemed to me a vile thing to see the kind of mess people make of their lives—the inevitable mess—and then becoming pursy and short-winded and red-nosed and stupid beyond words. None of them (except an interesting man, a doctor) could *talk;* they could only go on with endless repetitions. And then they could do little but tell tales of their desperate deeds, when one *knows* them to have been harmless creatures, and the only people they admired were 'blues.' It all seemed to me such an ugly business, and man to be an animal very little removed from the pig, unpleasant to see and hear and smell—and with no idea of what he was doing or where he was going—no emotion about it all. Surely an education must be very bad to break down so horribly in

middle-age as this—so many failures, and complacent failures. . . ."

"*July* 19.—I asked S. to lunch, a handsome Indian —a fine creature, I think; but what ugly voices and hideous pronunciations they have. . . . The Master invited himself to lunch and the combination was not happy. The Master talked private shop, with an occasional word to 'Mr. S.' S. said nothing, but ate and drank with gleaming eyes.

"Then I motored with Laurence; we went to Grantchester and walked across to Haslingfield, exploring a pretty quarry on the north-east end of Chapel Hill—full of flowers, a pretty campanula. . . . Laurence talked very interestingly though dryly about men and books.

"I feel now that the mistake I made in coming up to Cambridge was to feel that people here lived in an intellectual atmosphere. They do not—they live in affairs and gossip. They hate their work, I often think, and have few other interests. I believe my own intellectual temperature is higher than the average here.

"As we came back we saw the D.D.s and B.D.s in black gowns and cassocks flocking out of the Senate House after listening to the Lady Margaret Professorship praelections. . . . They looked like rooks in a rookery. I think I hated these meek, courteous, cautious, respectable men, so unoriginal and unenterprising, so comfortable and fortunate, so down on all unorthodoxy or independence. I should have liked to give them a little real religion to suffer for! . . .

"The Archdeacon of Ely* dined with me—such a bluff, clear-headed, humorous big man. There's a man one can both like and respect. . . . Salter and Hepburn came in and we played jacobi. To bed late, and slept very badly indeed. This heat is *damnable*. But it has one good result, that I read a lot of books in bed. . . ."

* Dr. W. Cunningham, Archdeacon of Ely, died in 1919.

"*July* 21.—It was 89 in the shade to-day and I am poured out like water. I spent the morning in trying to plan a bicycle shed and taking Hugh Walpole round my improvements—and in trying to clear off letters. Then we motored to St. Ives: looked at the church, where a girl like Cordelia played music. Then along the river-bank to Houghton in great heat. It was pleasant to stand by the dripping mill-wheel at Houghton, with its mossy spokes and its flying spray, and the smell of the cool river-water was divine. Then we sate by the lock and watched boatfuls of females shoving off. I think there is something very horrid about women—so self-conscious and inconsequent! . . .

"I had a curious letter from ——, very radiant within! I had said in my letter that I accounted myself a failure. He consoles me, says that I have an influence, but that he wishes I would not put it into the opposite scale from practical work. That is what I am supposed to do. What I meant by failure was that I had no official position, and that one is not held to succeed apart from that in England. . . .

"It was beautiful to-day, out in the wide meadows by the clear stream; but everything is getting burnt up, and one is sadly conscious of one's heavy and molten body. There is something very relentless about this slowly growing calm heat."

"*July* 26.—Cockerell* came to lunch, and we had a dignified duet about art and artistic things and artistic people. I took him all round my various decorations. He half-approves, but not very cordially. He is rather a purist, of course, and doesn't like anything which is not authoritarian. But I always like a talk to Cockerell; he is simple, direct, rather *fierce*, very sure of his opinion, not sympathetic; he is like an old-fashioned Evangelical, with the difference that he worships beauty in his way. . . . S. accompanied us, and I could not help being astonished at the relentless way he rubbed in his preferences, without the slightest intention of

* Mr. S. C. Cockerell, Director of the Fitzwilliam Museum.

giving them up. . . . It is a case with S. of 'a new commandment give I unto you' (not 'that ye love one another,' but) 'thou shalt have none other gods but me.' It *does* seem to me that compromise is the best thing in the world. . . ."

"*July* 27.—DAMN the heat! Here we are, as hot and scalding as ever, so that I begin to sweat reading the paper in bed. I have to go to town to-day, too. . . .

"I did go, and it was really fearful. . . . The Court-room was blazing, with the windows shut to keep out noise and orange blinds down: it was like some awful place of torture. . . . Then, boiling and grilling, to Cambridge—I did write a scrap in the train—found P.L. had arrived and was sitting in white shirt and trousers. . . . We strolled a little. Oliffe Richmond came to dinner and was pleasant enough; we sate in the garden in the dusk. . . .

"Then followed one of the most beautiful and exciting nights I have had for years.

"Percy and I decided to bicycle. We started about 11.0: went slowly to Barton, and so to Haslingfield: then between Haslingfield and Harston we lay long on the grass, near ricks, listening to owls and the snorting of some beast that drew nigh, to far-off dogs barking, and cocks crowing. The stars were like the points of pendants in the irregular roof of a cave—not an even carpet or set in a concave. We went on about 1.0, and then made a long halt near the G.N.R. bridge on the way to Newton; but no trains passed, so we went on about 1.45 to Shelford; and this was very sweet, so fragrant and shadowed by dark trees, while Algol and Aldebaran and other great shining stars slowly wheeled above us.

"We got to the G.E.R. bridge at Shelford—I was anxious to see trains—and half-a-dozen great luggers jangled through with a cloud of steam and coloured lights. There was one that halted, and the guard walked about with a lantern; a melancholy policeman

was here, in the shadow. The owls again hooted and screamed and cocks roared hoarsely.

"Suddenly we became aware it was the dawn! The sky was whitening, there was a green tinge to east, with rusty stains of cloud, and the stars went out. We went on about 2.30 to Grantchester, where the mill with lighted windows was rumbling, and the water ran oily-smooth into the inky pool among the trees. Then it was day; and by the time we rode into Cambridge, getting in at 3.30, it was the white morning light—while all the places so mysteriously different at night had become the places one knew. We found some bread-and-butter, and smoked till 4.0, when we went out round the garden, the day now brightening up: after which I went to bed, but P. walked till 5.0. The mystery, the coolness, the scent, the quiet of it all were wonderful, and the thought that this strange transformation passes over the world thus night by night seemed very amazing. . . . We talked of many things, but were a good deal silent; and I shall not easily forget the dewy silence and sweetness of it all."

"*July* 28.—Another day of DAMNED heat. The contrast of my hideous heavy sweating self to what it was last night at the mill-pool is like comparing heaven and hell. I am neither tired nor sleepy—only with the sense of relentless persecution which the heat gives. . .

"I went out to dine with Aunt Nora.* The Newalls were there—he is a dear. . . . Aunt N. very sweet. But the heat! I was not at my best—very full of stories and witticisms of a hard kind, and information: this all evoked by a tendency for us all to be afflicted with the stares. I felt how I should have hated myself if I had met myself."

"*July* 29.—After a bad night got up at 7.15 very hot and sick. Breakfast with Salter and P.L. Then at 8.0 R. M. Holland arrived, and MacMichael. We packed in together and sped to Holt. I rather enjoyed

* Mrs. Henry Sidgwick, sometime Principal of Newnham College. Professor Henry Sidgwick (who died in 1899) was a brother of Mrs. Benson.

it, I think; it was fairly cool. The country I liked best was that between Brandon and Walton, where I think I must some day spend a month—so full of sweet woods and pleasant villages.

"We were at Holt soon after 11.0. I went to a meeting. . . . We also had a boy in to reprove. . . .

"Then lunch: Westcott (Archdeacon) very deaf and venerable. The clergy were awful. The rebuked boy had as one of his misdemeanours played kiss-in-the-ring at a *Church Fête*. A vicar said anxiously to me, 'What is your view of the ethics of kiss-in-the-ring?' Then the speeches, in the open-air woodland theatre—very hot, and the air makes voices, and faces, ineffective. Westcott was good—nice and paternal in manner, amusing, not in the least priggish or profound. . . . The boys all looked smart and good, and the whole day was rather jolly.

"Then a rush round Miller's house with Chinnery, talk to two or three boys, tea and flight. I got off the main stream of gabble altogether. We came back at a great pace, up to fifty miles an hour in places. Salter and Percy to dine, and rather too much champagne. . . .

"I begin to feel strongly my own puerility, and my incapacity for all strong and deep emotion. I wish that by some means or other I might have a deep and worthy emotion, something which would carry me out of myself—not a shock, but a new wave and current of life and energy. All this zest in details and vignettes is very distracting and amusing—but there is no even flow of life."

"*August* 15.—Slept well, and it is really cooler, thank God. I had to trot about settling many points about chimes, doors, pavements, pictures, etc. The place now wants leaving alone again for a bit, to let the novelties grow old and venerable.

"Difficulties about plans. . . . It ended by Winterbotham and myself biking round by Overcourt and Holywell. The latter place filled with strangely-dressed

odd-looking persons—an old man with white whiskers and a puggaree, a young girl with a pretty discontented face, a young man of evil appearance. . . . W. was a little tired by the ride, I think, but he was very gracious and good-tempered. . . . I think he is getting a little tired, though he won't admit it, of these quiet days. He seems very content to moon about with me and read novels. I hope he will pick up business keenly, but I don't feel sure. Meanwhile he is a perfect companion, and I have never lived with any one in such peace and comfort. . . ."

"*August* 18.—I am sorry it is the last day of our long companionship. I have never lived on easier terms with so young a man for so long—and not quite my sort either, nothing literary or precious about him. But it has become natural to talk to him with absolute openness and directness and to say anything that comes into one's head. . . ."

"*August* 19.—The pitiless heat continues—cloudless sky, no hope of rain. I sit wishing W. were back every minute—and yet with a curious self-sufficiency and serenity which, when I am well, tides me over emotional crises. I don't like being thus at all—it is hard and cold; but it has always been so with me, and I have suffered very little through my emotions in this life. My emotion is like a looking-glass; it takes a very accurate and living picture of a present figure, but is unchanged by its disappearance, and as lucent-grey and polished as ever. . . ."

"*County Hotel, Carlisle, August* 31.—Our expedition was to see the Carlyle country. We went to Gretna Green, and so to Annan, a grim, trim, respectable, uninteresting town. We inquired our way at a bookseller's, where a nice handsome woman, with a rolling coquettish eye and a pink face, was voluble and confusing. Just as we were going off she brought up to us a hard-featured grim lady of about fifty, who introduced herself

as Carlyle's niece, daughter of his sister. She had little information to give; but she was very anxious we should realise who she was, and repeated it several times. . . . We went to Ecclefechan, a bare lean town, neat enough, but without any charm. . . . It seemed the abode of dry and prosperous people, with no need for sentiment. We found a merry old lady, with a broad accent very hard to follow, who showed us the graves. There are three, railed in, in a very dreary churchyard. The central one of solid sandstone covers Carlyle, and his brother John, the doctor. The kirk is of the vilest ugliness, red stone, with a spire, ground glass, very pretentious.

"We went to the house in the street where Carlyle was born. It is a white substantial house, with a porte-cochère in the centre. . . . Here there were many interesting photographs and odds and ends. It is very difficult to realise his appearance. When younger he was dour and underhung; the beard improved him, and at about sixty he was noble-looking, with the 'crucified' expression: an odd mixture of a peasant and a don, but always a peasant. In age he was very lean and spidery. The early pictures of Mrs. Carlyle very lovely indeed, with a touch of irony; but the pictures of her in 1854 (twelve years before she died) are hauntingly terrible—the mixture of ill-health and unhappiness very conspicuous. . . .

"We then plunged into the country to find Scotsbrig, the farm where they lived so long, where both father and mother died, and where Carlyle went so often in his depressed moods to idle and smoke and walk and contemplate and rage. The pictures represent it as a sort of hovel, but it's a very nice substantial homestead, with a good deal of dignity. . . . They had no servant, the sisters did the house-work; Carlyle had his own room, was never expected to do anything in the way of work, and loafed about by himself unquestioned. But the whole thing is much bigger and more comfortable than I had any idea of; it seemed to me an ideal little country retreat. This is another illusion dispelled. . . .

"The country has nice details; but it is homely and rather dreary—for use, not for ornament. The low, irregular hills, everywhere closely cultivated, rather bare, have no grace of outline. . . . Then quickly back in rain. A very interesting day, and I am so steeped in Carlyle that it was all full of meaning.

"The people are homely too, weatherworn and bearded farmers, ugly women, nice children. But they are intelligent and friendly in a rough, independent sort of way."

"*Orchard House Hotel, Gilsland, September* 5.—Spencer Lyttelton arrived at 7.0, very lean and brown and crisp. Ainger suggested going to Naworth, but I pleaded for Borcovicus, while it was fine; Naworth can be seen any day. Ainger said, so mildly, 'Very well, it doesn't matter a bit what we do,' that I knew mischief was brewing. A quiet, rather broken night, and a mournful awakening."

"*September* 6.—Ainger at breakfast threw off the mask. He said, 'As we have settled to go to Naworth to-day we must start at 11.0.' It's no use protesting; he is angelic if he gets his way, grim and fretful if he doesn't. So the car was ordered, and lunch, and I tried to write some of my endless letters. We started. Ainger and Spencer seized upon the back-seat of the car; I sate humbly huddled in front, opened gates, etc., Ainger saying obligingly, 'I am sorry you should have so many gates to open.' I hate this sort of thing; it makes me sulky and furious. That I pay for the whole show is a small matter. But it seems I have all the privileges of a host, as far as the servile details go, and none of the privileges of a host in settling where we go or what we do. But who is meek and I am not meek?—as the blessed apostle said with more force than precision.

"We went to Brampton, bought petrol, strolled about, and so to Naworth. This is a great castle of splendid antiquity, like a huge college, with halls and towers and

a chapel, round a courtyard, belonging to Lord Carlisle. . . . We got to the door, to find that tourists can only see it from 2.0 to 5.0; but a pleasant-looking woman in black, who was sitting with two little girls on a stone seat, got up and greeted Spencer. This was Lady Mary Murray; she went in and said she would tell Lady Carlisle. We drifted into a vast tapestried hall, such a noble room, with armour and pictures. Lady Carlisle was there, talking anxiously to a careworn-looking man. She came and greeted us pleasantly; she is pretty and looks good. She said we might see the castle, but that Lord Carlisle had been taken very ill; she was waiting to see a specialist, who was hourly expected. . . . Then she sent two jolly little girls, her daughters, to show us everything. They took us up into a tower, showed us Lord William's bedroom and oratory, which look out over the woods and the falling river, and chattered away very delightfully; but I was upset by our unfortunate intrusion, at the wrong time, and under such circumstances. I couldn't, however, help admiring their kindness and courtesy. I was thankful to get out of the place, noble as it was.

"But I don't think that human beings ought to have such houses at all, and certainly not by inheritance. It isn't as if they produced nobility of character or a sense of duty—and they must be very bewildering to the souls of their possessors. . . .

"When we got in to tea I felt as if I had been out for several years. Spencer is excellent company, however, and has a fresh knowledge of *people* which is highly entertaining; he seems to know everybody well. . . . I felt myself very elderly to-day. I have a bad knee, and I seemed stout, out of breath, hot, stiff and footsore—quite a pursy old boy, in fact. But I wasn't tired."

"*Magdalene, October* 21.—It seems so natural to have Winterbotham domiciled here. He is as ingenuous as ever. . . . He is a very dear person to me, and I am grateful for his affection. A delightful letter from Gosse,

and an offer of marriage from a lady in America. My two books published to-day: *Paul the Minstrel* (a reprint) and *The Leaves of the Tree.*

"Read a curious book, Petrarch's *Secretum*—a fancied dialogue between Petrarch and St. Augustine: a very intimate confession—but the odd thing is to find no mention of Christ or the Gospel, and to discover Augustine in the light of a philosopher, quoting Cicero and Virgil and recommending a sort of Stoicism. The whole thing is entirely individualistic, and considers religion as an affair between the soul and God, not involving any brotherhood with men or love of one's neighbour. . . .

"To Chapel. The creed was chanted, and the Master, forgetting the ritual, *intoned* the *Dominus vobiscum.* There was a dead silence, the organist shuffling about. Then Gaselee, with his mouth like a trumpet and a furious look, roared, 'Arnda weeth thy a-Speereett-a,' in a brazen voice as of a sacristan, in a stupefied silence—and saved the situation. . . .

"At dinner I sate next Waggett—rather fractious, but appealing; then by Pym, the chaplain of Trinity, and found him delightful; and then by Professor Newsom, who wants to make religion free from its old stupidities—an advanced modernist—I liked him, and his enthusiasm and his impatience with the old nonsense. . . .

"Frank Darwin brought in Festing Jones, the friend of Samuel Butler—a tall solemn, quiet man, rather like Samuel Morley. He didn't scintillate, so of course I had logorrhea and talked too much. Then a little talk to Winterbotham, and so to bed."

"*November* 5.—Woke in depression; but it cleared off, though all day long I have had touches of that misgiving, that nausea of the mind which is the trouble. I have been writing too much, I daresay, and going ahead rather recklessly. I have a very busy week ahead, but I will try to take things easier. Keable preached a sermon—rather moving, but I thought lacking in breadth

of sympathy. He described 'a view of things' which was meant to be characteristic of the Modernist—I told him afterwards it was only 'a view of Inge's.' . . . Winstanley came to dine with me and was very amusing. I had some talk with G. G. Morris, now Fellow of Jesus; he is a charming and sprightly little being, and brought up against me my old criticisms of him in my division at Eton. . . ."

"*November* 6.—I woke in the real old fierce depression. I could not shake it off. I went to shoot at Kat's Hall; we took two undergraduates. It was a fine, bright, fresh day, with a wind—all conditions delightful. I shot quite well, even at driven partridges. But a horrid melancholy hung over me all day, rising at times into a sort of mental nausea. I do pray I am not going to be submerged again. . . .

"Back pretty early; but I was very low and gloomy. I wrote a little. Hall made horrible by peevish and disagreeable argument. Then a long Kingsley meeting: an election, and a paper by Barstow on 'Alma Mater'—odd views of examinations and dons. The boys are keen and nice, and I really rather enjoyed this. I hope the cloud may pass off; but to-day has been a bad one."

"*November* 7.—I awoke a little sea-sick in mind, but decidedly better. Work soon restored me. . . .

"In the evening I went to dine at St. John's with Tanner—sate between him and Bateson and was well entertained. It is a fine place, that hall, and the great gallery is simply magnificent. Bateson was very good-humoured. I was in excellent spirits and all went well. Liveing, the President, is a fine grotesque old figure. The Public Orator was very civil and came to sit next me afterwards. He told me a funny story. A Scotch laird had his school inspected in English literature. A question was asked about Shakespeare, and a piping voice said in answer to a question about the plays, 'Macbeth.' 'Did anyone say Macbeth?' said the

examiner in strident tones. No one dared to answer. The laird, who was not up in literature and thought the word was a childish jest, said afterwards to his friends, 'the best of it was that the little rascal *had* said Macbeth.' . . .

"I came back having eaten, drunk and talked too much, but with a genial view of the world."

"*November* 8.—Went to the Royal Society of Literature: saw Newbolt, Gerothwohl, Prothero, P. Lubbock, etc. The room was not nearly full. It had been absurdly mismanaged, tickets wrongly distributed, no notice given. I 'gollyed' out my great paper, very rapidly and very loudly to a meek and amiable audience, mostly women. A silly affair! Newbolt and Percy seemed to approve. . . .

"Went to Athenæum. Then Henry James appeared, looking stout and well, and rather excitedly cheerful. He would not talk, but hurried off to order his dinner. I had induced him not to attend the lecture—it would be farcical impudence for me to hold forth to him! He returned at 7.30, and we sate down together. There is something about him which was not there before, something stony, strained, anxious. But he was deeply affectionate and talked very characteristically. He said of P.'s article on William Morris that it was charming, but began at the wrong end—that it was a well-combed, well-dressed figure, and that P. had overlooked the bloody, lusty, noisy *grotesque* elements in Morris. 'In these things, my dear Arthur, we must always be *bloody*.' . . . He had read Arnold Bennett. 'The fact is that I am so *saturated* with impressions that I can't take in new ones. I have lived my life, I have worked out my little conceptions, I have an idea how it all ought to be done—and here comes a man with his great voluminous books, dripping with detail—but with no scheme, no conception of character, no *subject*—perhaps a vague idea of just sketching a character or two—and then comes this great panorama, everything perceived, nothing seen *into*, nothing related. He's not afraid of

masses and crowds and figures—but one asks oneself what is it all for, where does it all tend, what's the *aim* of it?'

"By this time we had dawdled and pecked through our dinner—he ate a hearty meal, and there was much of that delicious gesture, the upturned eye, the clenched upheld hand, and that jolly laughter that begins in the middle of a sentence and permeates it all. . . .

"Then he spoke about Hugh Walpole—he said he was charming in his zest for experience and his love of intimacies. 'I often think,' he went on, 'if I look back at my own starved past, that I wish I had done more, reached out further, claimed more—and I should be the last to block the way. The only thing is to be there, to wait, to sympathise, to help if necessary.' . . . He joined all this with many pats and caressing gestures; then led me down by the arm and sent me off with a blessing. I felt he was glad that I should go—had felt the strain—but that he was well and happy. He is a wonderful person, so entirely simple in emotion and loyalty, so complicated in mind. His little round head, his fine gestures, even to the waiters—'I am not taking any of this—I don't need this'—his rolling eyes, with the heavy lines round them, his rolling resolute gait, as if he *shouldered* something and set off with his burden—all very impressive. . . ."

"*November* 21.—A call from Walter Durnford,* looking very neat and smart. He asked me to dine at King's on the 6th, but I refused. King's, my old college, is a harsh and indifferent stepmother—no notice taken of one, no interest felt or expressed.

"Then to lunch . . . three Nonconformists. The talk was good and solid, but curiously without charm—no traditions, I think, and very raw humour—the whole sensible, not attractive. But they seemed to have a grim free-masonry of their own, which I didn't share. It is odd how different I felt, and yet I don't know why.

* Sir Walter Durnford, Provost of King's in 1918, died 1926. For another impression of King's see May 14, 1924.

It seemed to me that they knew a narrower world, and believed it to be more sterling, honest and simple than mine.

"I have been put on the Press Syndicate, the centre of all Cambridge jobbery. It will mean much work, but I like to be included. I don't suppose I shall effect anything. But it means that I have after eight years a really recognised position here. Very unexpected. . . .

"It has been a cheerful and lively day, and I have been in good spirits. Last night I dreamed of swimming far in a great indigo-coloured sea, with strange city-clad hills on the horizon; and two dogs came and looked in at my window this morning, a brindled lurcher and a sandy Irish dog; so I am in the mind of the gods, for good or evil. . . ."

X

1912

Other work might be multiplied and diversified year by year, but the evening hours of writing were seldom encroached upon, and the days were few on which a packet of manuscript was not despatched to the typist on the stroke of dinner-time. If he published two volumes in the course of the year they perhaps represented a third of the year's written work. What became of all the rest? Some of it would consist of lectures, addresses, papers to be read before undergraduate societies, sermons to be preached in his own and other college chapels, articles for certain monthly and weekly periodicals (principally the *Cornhill* and the *Church Family Newspaper*). But with all this there was much still left that never came to print—essays, meditations, sketches, and here and there a complete book that for some reason had been put aside and forgotten as soon as it was finished. It happened that several volumes now followed one another to this fate in quick succession; for he began to write novels, and within a few months he had written four or five, and it was evidently impossible to find room for them all among his publications of the year. Moreover he felt at first some diffidence in appearing as a romancer; for though he had many of the gifts of a storyteller (as his pupils at Eton well knew), dramatically and psychologically his fiction might seem a light weight to be offered by an author of his standing. But it was composed with intense enjoyment, and of this first

batch of his novels he allowed one, *Watersprings*, to face the public. Two other volumes in his more familiar vein, *Joyous Gard* and *Thy Rod and Thy Staff*, were also written in 1912, and he gave a course of lectures at Magdalene on William Morris.

The year was marked by his becoming President of the college—such, at Magdalene, being the title of the Vice-Master—on the retirement of Mr. A. G. Peskett. He accepted the office with gratification, and enjoyed the duty of presiding in hall and at college meetings in the absence of the Master. Otherwise his life within and without the college went on unchanged.

"*Riviera Palace Hotel, Penzance, January* 6, 1912.—A strong gale with hissing rain, the fir-trees swaying, the sky bleared and stained. . . . I feel here in Cornwall like Polydorus in the Æneid. He was slain with many spears, and they buried him as he was, a perfect pincushion. Then the spears came up as saplings, so that when Æneas pulled one up, blood dropped and a lamentable voice screamed from the ground.

"Gosse became ill again and was seized with pain in the course of the morning. It rained and blew like the devil, while Gosse lay on a sofa and stared with haggard eyes at the fire, an uncut Swedish novel in his listless hand. He would not eat lunch.

"There is a constant drift of newcomers. . . . A dreary red-nosed dyspeptic clergyman at one table, at another a young man who smiles brilliantly to himself, at another a gloomy whiskered man, with brows drawn up and corrugated with care, who feeds himself carefully and compassionately and takes salt with his bananas—I like to watch all his little ways and manners; at another an elderly couple, a gross slow-moving old man, and a haughty female who has once been beautiful and now looks unutterably bored. A shifting pageant of human lives, like a big hotel, isn't a very encouraging affair. It doesn't give one the idea that life is very happy or satisfactory. At a place like this the people who come are

mostly fortunate people—with more wealth than the run of men; but there seem few happy parties or happy faces—much that is tired and cross and bored and disillusioned. There is a cross man by the window with a waxed moustache, whose wife, a spectacled wretch, spends the end of every meal in shaking up for him a phial of purple medicine. It's no good saying people *ought* to be more cheerful; it requires a good deal of character to be cheerful if you don't feel it. The wonder to me is why more of them are *not* cheerful, why life *should* be disappointing, what it is in experience which drains people of joy and hope, and whether they could help it. But I expect that many of these people are really more cheerful than they seem. Shyness in English people often takes the form of gloomy pride and hatred. . . ."

"*Magdalene, January* 23.—I began teaching to-day; the essay was on 'It is the baser part of the soul which enjoys success.' I was pleased to find that it evoked a good deal of real interest, and I had some rather illuminating talks with the boys. Then to lunch. Walked with the Master and discussed various schemes and cases with great care. . . .

"Wrote at *Morris*, and to hall—after which we had a long philological talk about the shifting nuances of words: very interesting: and it's a jolly life, when all is said and done. It is strange to me to reflect that I am now in the ninth year of my freedom, and have been given a life which is if anything too happy in its details and relations. I won't say that I have been much happier than I was at Eton, because my two terrible years intervene. But I like the variety, the absence of strain, the leisure, with a framework of duties, *far* better.

"Murray tells me he has sold 65,000 of my two shilling books; and I hear from Smith Elder that they have sold in England and America over 120,000 of my other books. That is a marvellous fact to reflect upon. It seems so odd that I was so dumb for so many years,

that I didn't begin to write prose, except for a few rather stilted books, till I was over forty, and that then there should be so many people who care to know what I think. None of the people with whom I live seem to care twopence what I think; and yet I have this enormous audience outside. It means that about half-a-million people are interested in what I say. That's a big audience. I can't pretend that I think about the audience at all, and still less do I think of pleasing them; but it does show that a good many people do look at things from the same angle. . . ."

"*January* 25.—I taught all morning, had some boys to lunch. Then rode, with much quiet content, in fresher and cleaner weather, round by Haslingfield. . . . Went to dine at Trinity Lodge: only the Master, Mrs. Butler, Scott Holland* and myself. It was very delightful. The Master had a cold, but was most benign. Scott Holland is a really charming person, so quickly sympathetic, so perfectly ready to follow any lead, with no idea of taking his own line, but of emphasising yours. The Master is undoubtedly garrulous; he tells long, not uninteresting stories, with many parentheses and names forgotten—the long clue slowly unwinds itself. It's a large mild refined, tender mind, quite off modern lines, living wholly in the past, and with a curious value for distinctions of every kind. . . . His aspect was venerable and noble, with a black skull-cap, pointed white fingers, smiling wrinkled brow, pale complexion, full beard.

"After dinner the Master read, very finely, extracts from books, took us to see pictures at intervals, told more and more remote reminiscences, and was rather too continuous. But it was all very dignified and beautiful. Scott Holland didn't get a chance, but whenever he did he took it. He is a merry soul and looks very plump and well, with no sign of wear and tear. It was a memorable evening, such a fine old scholarly gentle-

* Canon H. Scott Holland, Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford, died in 1918.

man in such a splendid background; but I should have liked to get S.H. to myself. The Master very affectionate: I was 'dear friend,' 'dear Arthur,' and he used me as a son, made me help him from his chair, took my arm. And I found I was 'Arthur' too to S.H. It was pleasant to be at ease in Zion."

"*February* 11.—I began hopefully; it was a warm day, with sunshine. Found Foakes-Jackson robing himself in the library, in order to preach. I never saw any one so inattentive; he seemed to writhe with boredom, stared at windows, scrutinised the brasses, read calendars. . . . The Master read collects about the King's return which seemed to be extracts from the *Times* leading article. . . .

"Then the Bishop of Edinburgh came in . . . full of life and sense and interest. We discussed immortality—caste—redemption, and a few other trifles. He is rather narrow in doctrine, but very wide in sympathy; and withal wholly simple, void of pomposity and with no ugly self-importance.

"Then I went off to lunch at Frank Darwin's. I liked his secluded house among bird-haunted thickets and little lawns and a bit of water—perhaps a little rococo, the garden. It seemed miles from Cambridge in those white-walled sunny little rooms, in a perfect stillness, with no view of houses. . . . Gosse was in high form and told many stories with felicitous expressions. . . .

"Then Gosse and I motored to Wimpole, and walked slowly in the sunny park. He was at his best and it was a charming time. Back by Bourn. I put him down at F.D.'s and was glad to think he had enjoyed himself. . . .

"Then to dine at Pembroke. There was a funny courtly old Bishop there, dressed in baggy clothes which he told us with pride had been Wilkinson's: a dear old boy, but not intelligent. Walpole slipped off to preach, Mason followed; then Carter came in from a sermon, and so it moved on. But there was a nice Truro atmos-

phere about it.* To think of Mason as the young seraphic chaplain, Walpole as a buoyant sort of undergraduate, Carter as the rather sad layman, myself as a schoolboy—and to be thus united, in all their dignities. I did value this all very much, and felt the comfort of old and faithful comradeship.

"Then home, literally sick with talk; then Gaselee brought in the Headmaster of Sherborne, and we murmured on to midnight. But this cataract of talk in one day is awful; and I get a sort of physical horror of words, heard and uttered. I stumbled gratefully to bed and slept sound."

"*February* 14.—To lunch with Winstanley: Denis Robertson came, very late. There was a perfectly enchanting youth there, with the sweetest of smiles and the most gracious of manners, like the son of Archestratus. . . . I talked too much and too flightily, but enjoyed it all.

"Then a ride by muddy roads; and by Pembroke I fell off my bike, which skidded—I tore my trousers, cut my leg, banged my knee, covered myself with dirt; rode angrily away with as much dignity as is consistent with torn clothes and a smudged face. Met Monty James as I came along, whose look was sympathetic. I washed the dirt all away, but became aware that I must die of tetanus in three weeks, and spent the evening in a lofty and mournfully resigned mood. Limped off to dine with Sir J. J. Thomson.† . . . I took in a deaf American lady with a cooing voice. . . . She could not hear half I said. Thomson, speaking to her, shouted like the Sons of God—I *never* heard such a row in a room. But the other side of me was Mrs. Giles, a nice woman and a pretty woman. We always talk confidentially, and she admitted that she had first met me with deep prejudice, because I was so injudiciously praised by my

* Dr. G. H. S. Walpole, Bishop of Edinburgh, Canon A. J. Mason, at this time Master of Pembroke, and Canon F. E. Carter, Rector of Hadleigh and Co-Dean of Bocking, had all served at Truro under Bishop Benson.

† Sir J. J. Thomson, O.M., P.R.S., Master of Trinity since 1918.

King's friends. By whom, I wonder? The comfort is to talk frankly, as I can to her; and I really have rather a thrill about meeting any one who literally does open heart and mind; but she is a flatterer, or at least she applies the sort of praise to me which women think men like. I confess I was interested and moved by this talk. . . ."

"*February* 18.—I walked alone—round John's walks, now full again (and how soon again) with aconites and snowdrops. Then by West Road, and finally fell in with the friendly Tanner, and mooned about talking of architecture and lecturing. He is a fine, able, solid, sympathetic creature. He said he was fifty-two—how the cataract *rushes* into the abyss—middle-aged men swimming along, grey-headed men on the edge, senile locks in the foam! There seemed such an endless well of time to draw from; and now it would be a long life if I lived as long as from my leaving Cambridge to the present time.

"I went off to Trinity and dined with Whitehead, an undergraduate, in New Court—a cold dinner, on a nice blue-striped cloth. Two other young men there, so sensible and nice. . . . Then to Bevan's, where I read my paper to about twenty people. Bertrand Russell there, and a strange bearded man who turned out to be Lytton Strachey. It was rather a fiasco; I was tired and stupid. There was no discussion. The paper was on J. A. Symonds. Not worth the trouble—never mind, one must just go on."

"*February* 19.—I feel a little discouraged to-night. As I drift more and more into University life, I drift more and more out of the college. I don't see how it can be helped. At my age I am in place on Boards and at Feasts, not in place with the undergraduates. I don't seem to have any power of inspiring them. I don't aim at that, but at companionship, and I miss both. . . . I think *Als Ich Kann* is a very good motto for my new house. I take up many things and

am no good at any one. It's humiliating, but I expect it's wholesome—anyhow, there it is!"

"*February* 26.—A great scramble. . . . Fled to the station, nearly late: looked over essays and reviewed a book in the train. . . .

"At 1.45 I was at Queen Anne's Gate: a pretty old white-painted panelled house, very attractive indeed. Lord Haldane very courteous and benign: his sister a rather nice, shy woman, but disconcerting, because she betrayed by her glances what she was thinking of. . . .

"Lord Haldane carried me off to his very nice study, a big airy room at the top of the house: not many books, but much apparatus for reading, a swing-desk, etc. He sate in a high chair: smoked two cigars and drank liqueur brandy, having eaten a big lunch. I broke my rule and smoked a cigarette. I stated my case.* . . . He heard me very patiently, and his big smiling face, pale and intelligent, full of kindness and sympathy, was very impressive. He heard me out; then he said, 'I see your idea, and I think it would be well to take it in hand. . . .' He let fall many dicta—as that education was so dull in details, so interesting in principles. He asked me a good many questions, and then said, 'We agree in this, that what we want is *ideas;* the machinery is there, and it would not spoil the life and training for leadership, which is the strong point.' . . . Then I walked to the War Office with him. He went very slow and looked rather old and pinched, as if his heart were not very strong. He gave me the idea of great kindness, sense, intelligence. . . . Of course he *may* be only diplomatic, but I didn't feel that. He promised nothing and did not commit himself; but he was frank, sympathetic and encouraging. . . .

"I was a little tired; it was hard work talking to Haldane; one felt in touch with a strong and critical mind; but I couldn't help being pleased to feel that he

* On a matter of educational organisation. Lord Haldane was at this time Secretary of State for War.

was giving my view serious consideration. He said that the reason why he had insisted on seventeen for the new army age was because the last two years at school were so wholly wasted. I had a good hour with him. Odd that I should have worked at education for so long, and yet I think I may have done more by to-day's talk for the whole affair than by all my thirty years of teaching. I am not insensible to the pleasure of taking my problem to one of the biggest men in the country and having real and serious attention paid it. I shudder to think what hot water I should get into at Cambridge if this bold move of mine were known. . . ."

"*March* 11.—I biked to Selwyn Gardens to see Verrall.* He lay very still on a couch by a screen, with darkened glasses, his hands all crooked out of shape; he was silent, and his face all drawn by suffering—sometimes like a corpse. But as we talked there came the old pleasant laugh, and the interest, and the bubbling sense of humour—that made one feel he was there all the time, just as lively and eager, only the husk wrong. It wasn't so sad as I feared; but it is horrible to think of all his pain and weakness. He can surely never get back to the world again? Yet he is down early, he reads, talks, even dictates. But I think he goes downhill fast. Mrs. Verrall was delightful, and I had a happy chattering sort of hour. He told me how some one once read aloud Macaulay's *Chatham* to Henry Sidgwick —the passage where Macaulay, quite simply and unaffectedly, says, 'If one compares Chatham with Oxenstierna, Albuquerque,' and about six other names—a plaintive voice said, 'But I don't *want* to compare him with Oxenstierna, etc.'

". . . Then there was a Kingsley Club meeting here. Williams read a learned paper on the Welsh Arthurian legend. . . . But I can't understand the caring for these legends *in themselves*. They are interesting to me, not for their crude imaginativeness and

* Dr. A. W. Verrall, King Edward VII Professor of English Literature at Cambridge.

exaggeration, but for the real possible human core in the middle of them. I do very much want to know what *kind* of a person the original of King Arthur was, and what his knights were really like; I don't care a bit for the vapourings of childish bards about them. . . .

"Harold Cox is editor of the *Edinburgh Review:* writes a nice note to ask for an article. But I'm not an Edinburgh Reviewer. My shallow spirit foams out its passion best in 1,600 extempore words, at one sitting. . . .

"I am rather dull and melancholy. I can't get the strike out of my head, and I don't seem just now to arouse the *semina flammae* or to chip fire out of anyone or anything. I think I am really rather tired. My book records that I have had 123 engagements this term, apart from all teaching—in two months. . . ."

"*Tremans, March* 22.—I read some Newman (*Apologia*), an intensely interesting and pathetic book. I discern clearly that he was really an *artist*, not an ecclesiastic at all. His love of poetry and music (he played the violin), his desire for peace and affection and approval and *praise*, very characteristic. The last meeting with Pusey and Keble horribly tragic.

"I walked alone—two hours' quick walking, varied by a hailstorm; the floods are out, the spring flowers belated; it is ill-humoured weather. I'm not exactly depressed, but I am not cheerful, and in much physical discomfort; but I wrote a little study of Newman easily and pleasantly. . . . My book (*Child of the Dawn*) looks nice, but no notice, good or bad, is taken of it, and I expect it will fall flat. I had great hopes of it, and even anticipated a row; but it's going to be a fiasco. Well, I must try again. I wish I had a definite book on hand; but I am piling up a volume of essays and writing my lectures on William Morris in a vapid and inconsequent way. Tiresome correspondence with

irrational parsons, and with a man who proposes that I should read quietly and meditate over a MS. book of his, then revise and amend it and see it through the press: all this because he agrees with my books, thinks me a Christian, believes I want to be of use to anyone. . . .

"I am close on fifty, and I suppose the best part of my life is gone; but I have some vitality left, I can write, I can teach. I might with good luck have twenty more years of activity. But one might always die, the idea of which is insupportable; and I might have another illness. I am not at all likely to marry, or to have any more romantic adventures. But I think I am more interested in affairs and people than ever, and I am very anxious to help in the cause of common sense, work and peace. I am still mildly ambitious. . . . But what I desire is to get at the meaning of life. I think I am an almost pure agnostic, though I believe in Christian principles; what vexes me most is to see people holding on to stupid unimportant fancies and beliefs, because they have been handed down. . . .

"And I also feel very strongly the duality of my nature: a strong stupid slowly-moving old nature underneath, which goes blindly and bluntly on its way—and a quick perceptive ingenious inquisitive nature above, living in brain and eyes, which has no permanence. That will die, I think, with all its little memories; but the other will pass silently and stubbornly on its way, and reappear again, I don't doubt. That is almost all that I believe."

"*Magdalene, April* 23.—Here was a pretty omen! As I sate reading at midnight, Gaselee having gone, my little clock sounded, ushering in my birthday. All at once my fire, which had been unlit all day, burst softly into flame! A cigarette-end, perhaps—but it was a delicate little *friandise*. Perhaps I might be rich, happy, famous, fortunate in love yet—who knows?"

"*April* 24.—I woke calm and serene: had a huge pack of letters, even presents—with good wishes and blessings from all sorts of unknown people—even some plovers' eggs! It's another calm golden day, very sweet. I have to go to town. . . .

"I went. The country was beautiful. I read Rupert Brooke's poems, some very charming, some strangely ugly. . . . To the Royal Society of Literature, where I took the chair, and heard an incredibly boring and tiresome paper. . . . Such a dreary party of faded persons. I made a speech, and was sketched by a little man in a notebook. Then to the Athenæum, where I read, dined, pondered. . . . Failed to catch Gosse and came back by the last train. Rather an unbirthday-like day; but I have been cheerful all through. I don't feel fifty—though I notice in myself a dulling, not of perception, but of the thrill of perception. That is unmistakable; but I am nimbler in mind, and I think a little less peevish, ambitious, greedy than I was. I don't know. . . . Well, I am a very imperfect creature, that's certain; but I desire to be enlarged, though I should like it done without discomfort."

"*June* 2.—I went to lunch with Glaisher. His rooms in New Court are filled with china. He showed us a *hideous* plate with a rudely-drawn female figure on it (1677) for which he gave a hundred guineas! It seemed an odd affair. Sedley Taylor, Professor R. (an American, father of a Magdalene man), Mrs. R., deaf but nice, and a simply enchanting Miss R.—about twenty, simple, pretty, so that I really fell quite in love with her, and watched her every movement and laugh. That is the kind of creature I should like to marry; and I really feel what a donkey I am to be fifty, and yet never to have had the sense to ask some nice girl to walk through life with me. This clean fresh pretty lively modest girl would be a delightful partner —and yet one is kept off it by stupid moods and fastidiousnesses.

"We told endless stories—rather dreary. . . . We had seven courses and champagne—what a festivity! But I was entranced and absorbed with the charming Miss R., and it made me light-hearted to see and hear her. Yet this odd emotion will come to nothing. Oddly enough I had for the first time been teaching her brother yesterday, a pleasant handsome consequential young man. . . .

"So this very busy and pleasant term comes to an end. I have written a book, seen many people, worked very hard. I have been cheerful and content, though craving for more leisure—but I don't pretend not to enjoy it.

"I have given away endless ornaments and pictures these last few days, and I am going to sell a lot of furniture. I have sent all my china to Fred. What a relief to get rid of my impediments—I must try never to get involved in *belongings* again."

"*Tremans, June* 19.—Heard of the death of Arthur Verrall, an old and well-loved friend. He had been growing weaker, but got up as usual, and died in his study after half-an-hour's unconsciousness. The last time I saw him I felt the end was near. He has borne great suffering very gallantly, and never lost the beautiful zest and freshness of his mind. . . .

"I suppose I might be offered the Professorship; but I don't want it and would rather be excused. I am only an amateur, and it would mean the suspension of my activities. I don't care about literature in the right way. . . ."

"*June* 21.—. —— wrote to me again about the Professorship and said he wished I might be appointed. But I wrote and pointed out that I was resident in Cambridge and doing a certain amount of literary work already unpaid, lecturing, teaching, reading papers. It seemed to me a pity to waste money upon me; we ought to get in an outside force of some kind. It is very hard to know one's own mind. I don't need the money, and

indeed it would rather diminish my income, as I should have to give up a good deal of writing. I am not equipped by any knowledge for the post; I know a lot in a desultory way about literary biography and modern English; I have a gift of presentment; but I am useful in the college and do a lot of varied work, all of which would have to go. And then I don't really believe in literature and criticism, but in something in and behind it all. I should hate to be for ever lecturing on literary periods, and I couldn't inspire or encourage men enough. One would have to be for ever talking big to immature minds, presiding at societies, looking at essays. I could not do this with any real enthusiasm; I am not an apostle of culture at all. Of course all this may be laziness and self-will, and if it were offered me I should have to face it. But I hope it won't be offered, and that I may be allowed to muddle on in my own way.* . . ."

"*Magdalene, August* 7.—. . . S. much concerned with the Student Christian movement, and has been to Swanwick. . . . I don't know what to think about it all. It seems to me rather a limiting of oneself. S., in his old pure-minded guileless insouciant way, entirely innocent, not scrupulous, seems to me a finer kind of Christian than one who goes to meetings and discussions and uses influence and makes people earnest. This sort of thing ought to be very spontaneous, or it is ugly with the ugliness of all conventional and moulded things. These great forces of life, emotion, love, faith—how hideous they are when they are run into definite moulds—how easy for the conventional Christian to miss the whole point of the affair, its easy graceful light-hearted spontaneity! I won't say it seems to me dangerous—nothing is dangerous—but it seems like a confession of weakness to organise and stereotype Christian endeavour. . . . The moment one organises it, ties it up, limits it, has a syllabus of it, discusses 'Christianity and the State' at 10.30, and 'Christianity and the Medical Profession' at 2.0, that moment it seems to me dreary.

* Dr. Verrall was succeeded in the Professorship of English Literature by Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch.

I can't imagine Christ going to Swanwick, and having four regular meetings and one prayer-meeting a day. I suppose that people must take their Christianity as they can and will ; but this seems to me a very business-like and commercial affair, only fit for people who are determined to fit Christianity in, and afraid of its falling out if it isn't *placed*. I think one ought to be a Christian *through* whatever one does and in spite of it, not *as well as* it. It seems to me like organising love and hope, having times to love and times to hope. I don't know! I don't want to see a man idle and rather peremptory and censorious, and then find out he is religious as well. I want to find him gentle and courteous and kind, and then be surprised by finding he is a Christian. . . .

"D. and R. to lunch; they were cheerful and not affected or shy. But Lord, what an old buffer I become! In a taxi the other day I raised my eyes, and what a cross stout red corrugated old party looked at me crossly from the mirror!"

"*Digby Hotel, Sherborne, Sept.* 1.—We strolled after breakfast to the school. It is a very pleasant town, with many nice buildings of an orange crumbling stone; but it has been much mauled, and there isn't a sense of the architectural taste of the Cotswolds. The Abbey is fine, and an old doorway with valerian and wall-weeds growing in ledges and niches was pretty. The school has fine buildings new and old, but is rather diffuse. . . . We went to the Abbey at 11.0: such a rich golden church, with fan-vaulting, so wealthy and stately in tone: big congregation, fine booming organ, moderate singing: no sermon. Gosse began by being bored, but found a Bible and read Job with entire absorption, a model of holiness and devotion, with the book held to his eyes. . . . As we walked back afterwards he expressed surprise that the Book of Job should ever have been thought an old book—so modern, so rationalistic, so philosophical; it is the Biblical Plato. . . .

"In the afternoon we strolled through the Park, a fine domain. The old oaks, growing out of a vast plantation of high fern, with deer grazing, had a certain feudal charm. But the fine thing was a delicious place called Milborne Port (in Somersetshire), a village such as Morris would have loved, stone houses clustering down to a stream, and a big cruciform church standing up among byres and orchards—a quite delicious sight. I do love villages and elms and green fields more and more. Tried a short cut and failed. Back by Oborne and a nice street of substantial houses (Long Street) where the Sherborne upper bourgeoisie live. The sight of a bare-legged girl under a walnut-tree, driving a flock of hens with a switch, delighted me. Then came tea and repose. I am happy and contented here; but my love of things beautiful and romantic has a little lost its sharpness, though not its equanimity of delight.

"In the evening Gosse read Tennyson; we are determined to work through *In Memoriam*. But we find much of it obscure, pedantic, cold, unemphatic, unpoetical. I am rather horrified to find how it has lost its charm. Gosse says with a profound sigh, 'We must never forget that poetry must have *charm*—the one essential'."

"*Tremans, September* 15.—I am troublesomely lame just now. I can't do without exercise—I get stupid and brutal. I walked round by Scaynes Hill, meditating my story; it opens slowly in front of me, and I have the same sense of *discovering* it, rather than inventing it, as I had in *The Child of the Dawn*. I wrote for three hours *hard*; then read a little of it aloud after dinner, and was pleased to think they found the book had some vitality. Then came Compline, which I detest with every fibre of my being—the discomfort, the silly idiotic responses, the false sociability of it, the utter meaninglessness of the whole absurd drama.

"I must have overworked myself, because on going to bed and reading Wells's *Marriage* I found myself in a very odd, unpleasant nervous state, jumpy, unbalanced,

as if my mind were skipping about on its own account and wouldn't obey me.

"Wells's book is very interesting—not beautiful, not *likely*, much mannerised, and spoilt as a book by a piece of silly romantic melodrama, the Labrador adventure, which is nothing but a transcendental and psychological *Swiss Family Robinson*. But he's a *poet*, little Wells, and it's there he scores: not much of a humorist."

"*September* 17.—. The Cornishes arrived. The Vice-Provost looks healthier and better than I have seen him for a long time, less inflamed and of a better colour. . . . She was very amusing and interesting. They are indeed a wonderful pair, so distinct, so fresh, so fine, so distinguished. Mrs. Cornish's determined attempt to include all in conversation is fine. I can't recall any of her epigrams, but I liked the strong sharp *pecks* she takes at life, like a fowl at an apple, *getting home*. She is seldom what you expect her to be—she is uncharitable, unfair—and then unexpectedly poetical and appreciative. She casts a light on things. He is very diffuse and inconsequent, but he has a clear judgment, too, and isn't taken in—and a wide range. . . . They are beloved people, and with so much light about them—a fine handling of life. . . ."

"*Magdalene, October* 14.—Woke oppressed. There's an article on my new book (*Thy Rod and Thy Staff*) which says it's like a little girl saying how much worse her measles have been than her little brother's. That's rather clever and not untrue! I have laid myself open to much ridicule; yet there's a flaming trumpet-blast in the C.F.N.

"I went to chapel, to my usual place (there was a feather-boa in it!) Then the Master came across, when the voluntary stopped, and led me by the hand to the President's stall; he was nervous and his hand shook. Then he said the formula—'Auctoritate mihi commissa ego Præfectus admitto te A.C.B. in locum et officium, in titulum et dignitatem Præsidis hujus Collegii, in

nomine, etc.'—and I bowed low to him. He gave me a little shake of the hand, smiled, and the service began. . . . The singing was horrible, but I rather liked my new place; it's a spacious stall, *πάντων μέτρον.* I suppose it's my last and only promotion; and I like a little touch of gilding. . . . The Master preached a really rather impressive sermon on simplicity—no rhetoric—it came out of his own mind. . . . He spoke of the multiplicity and complexity of his new cares.* I caught Gaselee's eye and we remembered that they included two days' shooting in the first week of office. . . .

"I wrote; and then came hall, where I spouted the grace and sate in Moses's seat. . . ."

* As Vice-Chancellor of the University, 1912-13.

XI

1913

The round of Cambridge, Tremans, Skelwithfold, and two or three country inns was followed this year as usual, scarcely interrupted save by an occasional excursion—to Birmingham, to Norwich, to Uppingham and elsewhere—for the delivery of a lecture. He still wrote novels, but still judged them in general unequal to the test of publication; he gathered from the *Church Family Newspaper* a number of his articles into a volume called *Along the Road;* and in the autumn he gave his fourth series of literary lectures at Magdalene, this year on Robert Browning. Nothing could now have induced him to depart from the accepted routine of his days, but within it his energy was undiminished; at fifty he had a young man's health and vigour—health which endured with small attention paid to it, vigour which had to be daily absorbed in the exercise of his relentless walks and rides. He seemed to be never tired and never unwell, and perhaps he was as nearly satisfied by life as a man could be.

Yet this is hardly the impression that is given on the whole by the diary. From the diary—which, be it remembered, is about forty times as voluminous as this present selection—it might appear that life crossed and vexed him not a little. I am not referring to the refrain of his lament over his want of leisure, nor to his occasional hours of misliking for the nature and quality of his work. These are to be

freely discounted; he hated leisure, and he loved his work too well to turn against it except in a passing mood. But it might often be inferred, in these years, that the people in his world were a small pleasure to him—not the people who casually came and went, but rather those who stayed in it, his friends; it might be supposed, from the plentiful pages devoted to their sins, that his friends were harassing company in a life that would have been happier without them. He was conscious himself of this propensity of the diary to scold, and sometimes he thought of destroying the whole of it for its want of charity. But in truth, if the volumes are read aright, it can be seen that his friends were not denied a particular tribute. His pen grew very mordant as it pursued them, but it could never leave them alone, never overlook them or pass them by; and this must be for the consolation of the victims, who will think it a truer compliment to be scarified than to be ignored. So much we may admit, but it does not follow that we are prepared to take our punishment in public—nor indeed that we invariably allow its justice. His hand was hasty, it was apt to be a word and a blow with him as he wrote; and it was the sharpest word, the most telling blow that satisfied him, not always the fairest. It was all on paper, however, nowhere else; and presently he and these wretches of friends were together again, and the shocking pages were utterly forgotten. To oblivion as deep they may now return.

"*January* 1, 1913.—A lot of New Year letters—such odd well-meaning people. One man writes to censure me for not being more dogmatic; I reply telling him to beware of spiritual pride. . . . One lady says she has read all the reviews of my book and she feels that reviewers have no hearts. So it goes on.

"I caught an afternoon train . . . and drove to St. Paul's. I liked the fine gloomy house,* all shut in by warehouses. Mrs. Inge gave me tea, and then

* The Deanery, St. Paul's.

showed me, bare-headed, the way to Blackfriars Station. I got to Caxton Hall and sate in a corner. I saw Arthur Carr, the Bishop of Edinburgh, and some other buffers in the audience. Inge entered very briskly, quite the Dean. I thundered out my paper [" Religious Education "] for nearly an hour. It was unorthodox. . . . Several people spoke: a wild female in tears, who was insane, I think—ejaculating ' the poor children—their poor little minds! ' at intervals: a blind parson and some nice females. I answered as clearly and politely as I could. There were 200 people there, one of the best meetings and best debates, Inge said, they had had. Then I went off with Inge, and by underground to the Deanery. We went up to see the children, but my godson and two little girls were asleep—but Edward roused himself from a chubby sleep to shake hands. . . . Miss Sichel, Simpson (Canon) and his wife to dinner. It was merry and intelligent. . . .

" I slept ill, hearing the great bells beat into the room hour by hour."

" *Magdalene, January* 29.—In the afternoon I motored out to Eversden and walked home—such a pretty quiet remote village, with a few cottages, a farmhouse or two, a crumbling church among orchards and pastures. I have a deep desire to live more in such places. It is off the main road, hidden in trees, utterly quiet and simple. Yet I couldn't live there, I know—my terrors would gather about me; yet as a child I could have lived there with perfect delight, and never have wished to leave the place. Business and sociability have laid strange hands upon me, and I can't be happy without stir and fuss, though the prospect of busy days nauseates me. I hope that before I die I may have a little taste of very quiet and still life. The little orchard-ends and lanes and cottages seemed very dear and beautiful to me to-day; and I believe that life ought to be lived on quiet lines. I was very happy there for an hour. . . ."

"*January* 31.—A hideous day of impatient work: many letters to answer, but I had to teach all morning: had men to lunch. Press Syndicate from 2.30 to 6.0. Letters again: dined hurriedly and insufficiently: went to Newnham. Coffee in Miss D.'s room in Peile Hall: a pretty girl, Miss S., and some meagre and shawled dons. Then to a big lecture-room crowded with Misses. Here I lectured on the art of fiction, and liked the look of my audience; it was like preaching to canaries. Three who giggled and talked at the back of the room disconcerted me. I was then shown out by Miss Stephen and the two girls. Rather a jolly pretty business, but I am not *puellis idoneus*. I felt a harmless old buffer—I haven't the sex in my heart. Back, and wrote letters."

"*February* 3.—Off to town by the 4.30: to the Athenæum and wrote letters: found Basil Champneys and Sir F. Clay going to the Literary Society. Went there myself, the only man in mufti. A big gathering. . . . I sate between Newbolt and Prothero and had a really delightful evening—such kindness from every one. I expect it means that I am no longer shy, and expect friendliness—and certainly get it. I should like to think it means literary renown, but I feel myself more and more unregarded in that respect. I am taken as a mild literary hack, who turns out a lot of sentimental and rather mawkish books. I am simply accepted as a don with a certain output of writing which men of taste don't read. I don't resent this, though I wish it were otherwise. I am just *labelled* as a more or less well-known writer; but the result is that every one knows just what I am, and they are accordingly civil. I have my place, in fact—not a big place, but a definite place. . . ."

"*February* 8.—I struggled with letters all the morning. Then two boys to lunch, and a walk with Salter from Harlton through Haslingfield; he was very gay and amiable. . . . One thing he said which struck me—

that my books were not real books, didn't represent my real self—that it was a sort of pose (he didn't use the word), a mild kind religious sort of atmosphere, while in real life I was brisk, profane, worldly. It is true that my books represent my lonely thoughts and moods, and that in ordinary intercourse I am different. I am too anxious to get on friendly terms with my companions. But the books are much more real than the talks. I have no real use for humour and amusing things—those are things to *play* with—and though I expect the impressions are different, yet there's no insincerity. . . . Anyhow I can't help it. There are two quite distinct things in me, my social self and my solitary self, and they are very different. . . ."

"*February* 11.—Went off at 2.45, much fussed and leaving loads of work behind. I had my hair cut, and then to the Deanery [Westminster]. Had tea with Herbert and Mrs. Ryle; then sate a little in a nice panelled parlour, used by Robinson as a private study, with a closet opening on the nave. . . . Then dressed. Lord and Lady Fortescue arrived, the former shy and nervous, in red ribbon; Lady F. most charming—she said she was never allowed to see me at Eton, because Ebrington always said, 'Mr. Benson *hates* mothers.' A Count William Bentinck there, a nice youth. Then Prince and Princess Alexander of Teck arrived, he in red ribbon and star, she very pretty and charming. . . . Then came the Duchess of Albany, very stout and cheerful. . . .

"At dinner the Duchess, who was next me, was full of kindness and mirth . . . advised me to marry, the *right* person, asked about my books, gave me advice just in the old motherly way—she is a real dear. . . .

"Then to the Abbey, so grand in the glimmering light, with a little mist floating in the vault. I sate under the lantern. There was a lovely programme of music—Arcadelt, Bach, Wagner, etc., played by Bridge, with some vocal music—one or two pieces with bells (really metal bars), which he was very keen about, but

which I thought hideous—out of tune, and the percussion notes not blending with the wind-notes. But the music stealing or rolling through the aisles, the faint light, the high dim windows, the ghost-like monuments, were as beautiful as anything on earth could be. The best we can do! . . ."

"*March* 7.—Burne-Jones* wired to say he was coming down; I asked him to lunch here. Taught all the morning. He came to lunch—very amusing. . . . Then he went to the Fitzwilliam, and I had a short, sharp ride by Coton. Back at 3.15, and we went to the Dolmetsch concert of ancient music in the hall. We sate in the gallery, behind Lady Braybrooke. The place was crowded with odd and faded undergraduates—from King's: the daïs full of strange, brightly-painted harpsichords. Dolmetsch, a man of sixty, a mass of grizzled hair, pointed beard, low collar: Mme. D. dressed as in a Medici picture: and a tall grim lady in a blue shawl, who sate gloomily in the background. . . .

"Dolmetsch showed his lutes and viols and talked on. 'The old people used to make music for themselves, in a room just such as this. Now we pay to hear *noise;* we do not hear music, it is noise we hear! What I am going to play to you is awfully beautiful, awfully simple, but really quite beyond the reach of the modern people.' He described the instruments. . . . Then some odd tinkling things were played on virginals and lute—sounds as if one had shaken up a cage of mice and canaries together. . . . There were just one or two lovely things, a duet for two viols, a recorder solo; the rest was very barbarous, I thought. But the thing interested me—the strange pose, the unreal air of the whole, and yet the certainty that these odd creatures really lived in their absurd art—a curious mixture of admiration and despair, with a strong desire to giggle. It was all so real and yet so fanatical, as Dolmetsch glared over his recorder, or sate with his mop of hair

* Sir Philip Burne-Jones, died in 1926.

tinkling on the virginals. Such an odd world to live in—it reminded me of *Evelyn Innes*. We went away after Part I, the absurdity of it being uppermost. The collection of people listening with grotesque earnestness to these very odd sounds, the deliberate antiquity of it all, the sweeping aside all the progress of the art—it interested me as a revival of what the old world called music—and the sense that they probably found the same emotion in it as we find in the new music. It is all a symbol, of course; but few people there understood that—they thought it was the thing itself which was beautiful. . . ."

"*March* 15.—At 1.0 I drove to the station and caught the 1.37. . . . A great north-west gale blowing loud. The Brandon country is delicious, with its bare heaths and pines, and streams of sapphire blue, wind-ruffled, among pale sedge-beds. Then it became Norfolk, an attractive country. . . . So to Cromer, where I was met by a car. It was awfully cold. I liked the look of Cromer, its gay red houses among the little sea-woods, and we went by pleasant wooded roads, through sparsely inhabited lands [to Holt]. I found Howson, got tea, went to the hall: delivered a lecture on Hans Andersen, wholly without nervousness. The boys looked very jolly. They are so friendly here. The captain of the school came up and talked, and a vivacious handsome boy, Graves, son of C. L. Graves, came to ask questions. Then back to dinner. . . . A lot of masters came in to desert. We smoked and discussed the prospects of the school up and down till 11.30. . . . I like the way in which the boys walk in at any time, to ask questions, even during dinner. Howson is a good host, not fussy, genial. . . .

"I am glad to have done this; it's tiring, in a way, but my nerves seem to be strong. . . . I am glad to find the masters feel confidence in me. Howson introduced me to the school as one who worked very hard for the welfare of Holt, mostly in the background; and it is interesting to have to do with a place like

this. It is a good little break, a wash of outside interests through the mind, and the sight of all those jolly handsome friendly boys did me much good. I am to come down and address them in chapel next term. . . ."

"*March* 17.—I went round my garden with Doncaster, who, like God in Paradise, pronounced it all to be very good. Then lunched alone, and rode off in bright sun and high wind along the Huntingdon Road. It was slow work. There came a blackness out of the north-west, and then ghost-like sinister wisps of grey cloud, whirling and forming and vanishing on the black background; then heavy snow, flying along the ground. I turned aside to Boxworth for shelter, in the well-warmed church, full of pretty Kempe windows—but, oh dear me, how depressing to see *exactly* the same figures and patterns and faces over and over again—the same mild old men, eyes far apart, woolly-haired, in the same heavy copes—not a single detail of face or robe or colour that one hasn't seen a hundred times before. How could the old man go on turning it all out everlastingly? But I suppose that's just what critics might say I am doing.

"I got back drenched through and through with melted snow; wrote a paper called 'Prophets of Baal' . . ."

"*April* 24.—My fifty-first birthday—a quite lovely day. I had a charming picture sent me by Mrs. R.—some flowers, by an Italian—a book from Maggie . . . and other books and letters. I had a busy morning of writing, much interrupted. Then in the golden afternoon a long vague ride out to Whittlesford, blest with peace. I find I have forgotten ——'s review already! Then some writing. Monty James, Gaselee, Salter to dinner: much talk and laughter, and cards later—so I had a very happy birthday. I didn't look backwards or forwards. I have got my work and my place and my friends, and I must just peg away. I'm abundantly

contented and very much interested in life as it comes."

"*June* 10.—The Vice-Chancellor, full of affairs, came to see me at breakfast and arranged that I should attend at the Lodge for the great men to sign their names. . . . At 1.30 I arrayed myself and went off. The recipients of degrees arrived one by one. Wagner, the great political economist, who became famous by suggesting the annexation of Alsace, is an old weary leaden-coloured red-eyed man, hung all over with orders, frail, tired, sparsely-haired. He is a peer of Prussia—but what a sorry sight!—he looked like an old purblind maggot. I wouldn't come out of my dignified retirement in Germany at the age of eighty to receive a degree in England. There was a jolly admiral, Fawkes, in full uniform—a calm, genial big man, who looked very solid and splendid, and quite capable of defending the country. . . . Sargent, a big burly sanguine man, with large rather protruding eyes, might have been an admiral too, or a city man—not a bit like an artist. Hardy (in a LL.D. gown by mistake) looked very frail and nervous, but undeniably pleased. . . . Then we all adjourned to hall. I read grace sonorously, and found myself at the end of the high table, between Sargent and Hardy. . . . There were two or three brief speeches. Then we adjourned for coffee; and then my car came up, and I helped shambling Doctors in and sent them off.

"When they were all gone I flew back, changed, and rode into the country—very sweet and fragrant. I went to Comberton and back. But my nerves are in good order, and I didn't find the ceremony at all trying—so that I didn't wish to be out of the busy world at all— rather amused indeed by the fuss and show. . . . It's new to me to find myself being pointed out as I walk about, and seeing myself much observed. It isn't a very lively satisfaction—but how grand I should have thought it twenty years ago. . . ."

"*Tremans, June* 27.— ——— writes me a much-injured letter; he protests that I asked him his opinion; he says he grieves to see my beautiful power of expression not engaged on something 'tougher and tighter.' But he protests his devotion, though he says he is vexed that I should so often have to talk and think harshly of him.

"To all this—which is rather morbid—I reply that I never think harshly and only talk pettishly because I am vexed to see him so quiet and decisive. I explain that my whole attitude is that of mortified vanity. I began very unambitiously—then had some successes—then an *ad captandum* move. I compared myself to a nigger minstrel rolling his eyes and capering and waving bones—and people just looking *through* him.

"Oh dear, I wish I knew what it all really was. I have a quiet spirit in some ways; but I suppose we have all a touch of something morbid and not quite controlled—as Maggie's collapse shows—which papa had, but coupled in him with great physical strength. There is a touch of diseased self-consciousness about us all, I think.

"My own real failing is that I have never been in vital touch with anyone—never either fought anyone or kissed anyone! Like Dmitri Rudine, I can neither be soldier or lover—and this not out of any principle, but out of a timid and rather fastidious solitariness. Then I have an appetence for success—or for sensation, at all events—and don't want to take trouble. I have quick perception and a love of beauty, but I can't finish or perfect anything; and so a sort of ineffectiveness is very legible in all I do—something *inevitably* there; and I don't like to be confirmed in this suspicion, however tenderly and faithfully. That is why I am so provocative; but I don't think it grand or dignified, quite the reverse. Just now I'm not *épris* with anyone—and that's a part of my unhappiness; though I'm not unhappy in the technical sense at all, only vaguely disquieted and feeling as if I were losing time every day. . . ."

"*August* 3.—*Lord R. Cecil went off in his motor. Jack Talbot went off, too, and I was taken to task for saying to him, 'I'm glad to have met you again,' as too American—but it was natural enough. Then looked at the visitors' book, which is full of pleasing sketches; I see I was last here in 1903. Talked to Robin Strutt. He told me a good story of false induction. A man at Trinity, in the attics, used to play a piano very badly; his neighbour, whenever he did so, got out of window and put a slate over his chimney; and the man consulted his scientific friends as to why his playing on the piano always made the fire smoke. . . . Then my car came and I made very cordial adieux and rolled off through the village. . . . I was back [at Cambridge] before 1.0: read letters and papers. I am rather tired.

"But I liked my visit, though it was hard work. I wish I could listen more equably; but I feel I have to work hard and to get into relations with all the party. That is my bourgeois way. But I don't think I want to be liked—I rather desire just to be as acceptable as possible at the time—to take my part. I find I can talk on the whole more coherently and even amusingly than most; but I don't much *want* to—it is a sort of strain, a performance. . . ."

"*August* 25.—I read the life of Ruskin, and think it a fine book, rather too detailed in places. It's not much good going into details about his artistic work; the thing is to give a picture of his frenzied and harried industry, and the charm of his outer life all the time. Ruskin is a curious instance of a man whose success was wholly due to his impassioned autobiography; but the British public is such an ass that he *ostensibly* owed his success to the fact that he came solemnly riding in upon the philosophy of art. He explained nothing and synthesised very little; it's only a logical statement of passionate preferences. But the B.P. has got to think

* At Terling, in Essex, staying with Lord and Lady Rayleigh.

that it must be taught something definite, worth the money. . . . "

" *Tremans, Sunday, August* 31.—Hot and heavy, with a warm rain falling which rustles in the trees. I slept deep and long last night, with infinitely mournful dreams; but that clears off the irritability that comes of light and broken sleep. . . .

" In the afternoon I walked somewhere, meditating on my story; wrote a passage: then came dinner, and the tiresome Sabbath Evening. We have talked all day and at every meal, and yet it is now impious to play a game—we must sit and talk! The thought of compline always weighs heavily on me, and reduces me to sulky despair; it was as awful as usual to-night. The solemn gathering for such a ceremony—that twelve ordinary people should cry out in concert 'Thou shalt go upon the lion and adder; the young lion and the dragon shalt thou tread under thy feet'—seems to me a sort of idiocy. It isn't true as a statement; it isn't poetical or uplifting. I can just understand one beautiful voice reading it aloud; but when it's a pack in full cry——! Fancy reading 'Swiftly walk over the western wave' so!

" Hugh and I had an argument; he admits that he himself is not much 'hampered' by services, but he says they represent the idea of corporate worship. Well, I can understand combining for *pleasure*, as at a dinner-party of chosen friends, or combining for *use*, as at a meeting to discuss some point about which one wants different views, or for *action*, where numbers tell. I can't conceive combining for *ceremony*, unless one likes it. I don't believe that such worship is more pleasing to God than the croaking of frogs in a marsh; and I should have thought that if it's a mystic kind of rite, one worshipper who hates it, thinks it ridiculous, wishes he wasn't there, must break the circuit. Hugh says it may be that one has grown out of it—and I certainly used to like ritualism—but it may also be atrophy. I don't think it much matters whether one grows superior

to mountain climbing, or too stout for it—it comes to an end naturally enough."

"*September* 4.—A hot windy day; I'm still a little edged, I find. Wrote in morning, some of these d——d Oxford and Cambridge Joint Board reports having to be rewritten. Then after lunch I walked alone by Birch Grove, and a delightful wood-path up to the Danehill road. . . .

"Then wrote fiercely, and not only got on, but saw, glimmering through a haze of words, the end of my story ahead. The novel was begun in June, here—10,000 words were written. Then I wasted much of July and August in writing a shapeless book, 40,000 words, on 'Fear.' Then I wrote 33,000 words of the novel at Cambridge. Then I came back here, and in nine working days I have written fully 25,000 words—and I foresee six more chapters, say 20,000 words more."

"*September* 7.—I must have written 45,000 words of my novel in the last fortnight, I think. Is that possible? It isn't very bad. It wants some smoothing down.

"I walked alone. . . . But I was stupid and heavy-hearted. All the same I wrote a very energetic bit of my novel, the best scene I have yet written, and I really think dramatic; thus leaving myself with only one more chapter to write, as the book is planned. It may need two."

"*Ludlow, September* 15.—I was wakeful, but not unhappy. At some dim hour there rang out a knell, accompanied by the howling of a dog. I slept again and woke to a day of bright sun. . . . I wrote a few letters: had a comforting one from Percy, surprised that I ever feel futile! I seldom feel much else, but I twirl plates, like a conjuror, so that the 'awful inner sense' supposes that something *must* be going on above. . . . The only shadow on my mind is that *Watersprings*

is published to-day, and I fear may be thought a foolish sort of book. . . .

"A lot of letters, mostly from well-meaning admirers: a touching one from a girl, unnamed. It is odd to be regarded as a well of light and comfort. Perhaps if I valued it more, as Oliffe said yesterday, I should do better. But I like to have a free hand and I don't respect art, and I don't value influence—so that between these three stools I fall to the ground. . . .

"It has been a pleasant time here. I have done very little work and have been much in the air. Oliffe has proved an interesting if provoking companion, and I think *he* has enjoyed it. It is a friendly and well-managed hotel; but our sitting-room is noisy, and there has been a great passage of visitors. Still, I have been well and mostly cheerful, though anxious and a little cumbered with cares."

"*Magdalene, November* 1.—Dined at the Lodge at 8.0: the only guest Thomas Hardy, who was very simple, merry and comfortable. We discussed the ceremony of installation*. . . . The Master was afraid that Hardy might dislike a religious service. But Hardy said that he wasn't afraid of a service or a surplice; he used to go to church three times on a Sunday; it turned out that he often went to St. Paul's and other London churches, like Kilburn, and knew a lot about ecclesiastical music and double chants. He had ordered a complete set of robes, too—bonnet, gown and hood. This restored the Master's confidence. We sate and talked and smoked; and the old man wasn't a bit shy—he prattled away very pleasantly about books and people. He looks a very tired man at times, with his hook nose, his weary eyes, his wisps of hair; then he changes and looks lively again. He rather spoiled the effect of his ecclesiastical knowledge by saying blithely, 'Of course it's only a sentiment to me now!' He said something like 'I wish you had some name for the college to avoid confusion with

* Mr. Hardy had been elected an Honorary Fellow of Magdalene, and had come up for his admission.

Magdalen Oxford.' I corrected him and said, 'You ought not to say *you*, you must say *we*.' He chuckled at this and said, 'Very well, *we* and *our* college.' "

"*November* 2.—I went into the library at 10.25 and found Hardy in a surplice, with a gown (scarlet) over it. Gaselee was perturbed and said, 'We must try to think of it as a *cappa magna*.' The Archdeacon of Zanzibar was there, an odd mixture, in appearance, of a woman, a Chinaman, and a seminary priest. We formed a procession, and the Master asked me to join it. He and Hardy went up to the altar; the men stared at the little figure, all ablaze. . . . The Master admitted him in Latin, standing by the altar, walked down with him, and put him in my old stall. There was a temporary organist who played badly, and the music was horrible. The Archdeacon preached rather well, on God being a God of *desire*, who both hated and loved—not a mild or impersonal force.

"When we came out I took Hardy to my house, and he, as a former architect, was amused at my devices. He sate for half an hour and talked. He said he was amazed at my output. He said he couldn't write now, only a bit of verse at intervals; he was ashamed of his little book of republished stories and surprised at its good reception. I said that I wasn't an artist, only an *improvisatore*—no quality in my work. He said, 'Oh, you must leave other people to say that, if they choose.' He looked tired, but bucked up, and I walked back to the Lodge with him. . . .

"At the end of dinner the Master proposed Hardy's health in a few very nice words; we rose and drank it. Hardy sate there beaming, drank and nodded back, but didn't speak. . . . He said, 'I should like to think I should come here often, and I mean to—but the flesh is weak!' I liked the old man very much, so simple and confiding. He told me he had enough verses for a book, but he didn't know whether he ought to include it in some verses he wrote when his wife died—' very intimate, of course—but the verses came; it was quite

natural; one looked back through the years and saw some pictures; a loss like that just makes one's old brain vocal!' . . . "

"*November* 28.—I went off to town: at Fishmongers' Hall had some talk with various people: luncheon and a Sanatorium Committee. . . .

"We went down with Inge to Caxton Hall*. . . . The speakers took seats at the table—Yeats, Hewlett, Raleigh, myself, Binyon. Raleigh opened and introduced Masefield; Hewlett made a very ineffective little speech about Mrs. Woods. Then I bawled my panegyric of Inge—he didn't hear a word, and Gosse clapped me as if he were scaring birds. Binyon made a neat little speech about Beerbohm. . . . James Stephen was the [Polignac] prizeman: a little man with upstanding hair, like a pixie or elf, came up and took his cheque. . . . Inge and came and said he would try to live up to my words; and after a few more scrappy words I got away to the Athenaeum, where I dined and read books."

"*December* 4.—I read an article on rhetoric in the *Times*, which opened a door to me. How odd those suddenly opened doors are—I saw in a sudden flash that the thing to do in writing is not to argue, not to concern oneself with opponents—just to dip up what water one can out of one's own wells and leave it. The only fine things come out of the lonely part of the mind, out of the region where one loves and hopes; the stale things come out of the place where one jostles and scores off people. I don't make vows now; but a suggestion like this sinks into the mind and bears fruit in due season. . . .

"I received a fixed offer from the *Century*—£200 for five essays, and a book to follow.

"Then a hurried ride in wind and some rain by Haslingfield—fresh and chill. Then I began to write an essay

* Meeting of the Academic Committee of the Royal Society of Literature and admission of new members.

for the *Century*: dined in hall, a very friendly little party: and went to Quiller-Couch's symposium—about forty men, all round the room, smoking and whispering. Two little papers were read, and I liked the calm humorous way in which Q.C. raised points; I shudder to think of doing it—but he did it well. There wasn't much talk; I hazarded a few remarks, but I think I rather oppressed the party. I had been told that I was to be 'drawn' by the Kingsmen, but anything less like baiting I never heard. The affair hadn't much vitality, but it is a good thing to start. The room which I furnished and replenished is nice enough, with my books and shelves. . . ."

"*December* 6.—I had a note from Ainger telling me of Spencer Lyttelton's death, to my great grief. I had known him some thirty years, ever since '84. He had a wonderful way of making one feel that he welcomed one and enjoyed one's presence, and that it was a natural and genuine delight to him; this gift is denied to many more strenuous and virtuous people. I used to be afraid of his gruff manner, his 'Hah!' or his downright 'You appear to be totally unacquainted with the matter' —but grew to realise his real tenderness and sweetness, always fresh, but which increased with years. His handsome, rather grim face used to melt from within, and his eyes become kind.

"The *Times* says rightly that he was always an amateur, at politics as well as cricket. He never struck me as having any intellectual principles, or views, or moral aims; he had not thought out anything and didn't know what he thought. He was interested in travel and personality, and all he did was in the style of the accomplished amateur. He read a great deal—why, I never knew—books flowed over his mind like water. But though he was idle, unoccupied, inhospitable, and in a way selfish, yet he never became peevish or fanciful or cross-grained or faddy—always just as simple and boyish and active. And on the whole I expect he did more to make a great number of people happy than

hundreds of people of the —— type, with far nobler programmes.

"He was a humble man, for all his assurance. It is very strange that he should be gone; he seemed built for many years of life; but it's a happy passage. I have the letter he wrote Ainger on November 21 about an operation—'It is an unexpected blow, but it must be faced.' He was operated on on Monday, December 1, and he died on December 5. That is the way to leave the world. . . ."

"*December* 21.—. Wrote an article—not very good; I am stodgy. I found a very unpleasant attack on my writing in the *British Review;* I am complacent, condescending, superfluous, otiose, it seems. I am well aware that I am not among the writers of the day. I don't attract; my vogue is over for the time. I have got my own little public, and cater quite simply and peacefully for them; but it is a priggish, sentimental, solemn, ineffective sort of public. . . . I don't suppose that the very busy life I live now does help my writing; but I don't see at present how to disentangle myself from business; and it gives me variety of experience, as well as some health of body and mind. . . .

"It is curious, as Percy says, that I can't get a certain acidity of perception and a derisiveness of phrase into my books. In my books I am solemn, sweet, refined; in real life I am rather vehement, sharp, contemptuous, a busy mocker. But I am also somewhat of a fatalist. However, I am going to try to leave the Long free for writing, and to have a subject ready to begin upon. . . . I think I ought to be able to write rather a good story—if I weren't really so *lazy:* that is the main trouble, my hurried exuberance. . . ."

"*Tremans, December* 31.—A photographer arrived, and we were taken in a group exactly as we were taken ten years ago, in the same positions. I found that I still had the very same coat in which I was photographed

before! It is the photograph which has been constantly reproduced. . . .

"The end of the year—I don't like to forecast anything or to make resolves. I have had a touch of my depression to-day—just a hint that it was there; but I exorcised it by work. I was awake at midnight. 1913 has been a much-abused year, but it has been good to me. I have been well and busy; I thought I had made a new friend, but I am in doubt now about this. And so I say good-bye to it as I do to a host when I have been kindly and punctually entertained."

XII

1914

Some pages from the diary of 1914, before the outbreak of the war, will show that the mood of dissatisfaction with his life and work continued to haunt him; but this was a mild and transient melancholy which had nothing in common with the miseries of his years of illness. He might sigh to think that his artistry still fell short of his vision, but in both he had an unimpaired delight; these last months of the old life at Cambridge were prosperous to the end. There was indeed one perennial anxiety elsewhere, gradually increasing; it was the condition of his sister, whose mind had never fully recovered since the beginning of her illness, seven years before. All this time she had been living away from home, near London, seeing very few people, but among those few always her brothers, who visited her constantly. For a while it was hoped that she might eventually be restored to normal life; but there now came a change for the worse in her state, and in the course of the next months it grew evident that she had not long to live. Arthur was to see her again, but very rarely, before she died in 1916. Her long illness was a sorrow upon the life of Tremans that was borne by her family, and first of all by her mother, with courage unexampled and unfailing; but during all these years the strain of it was never relaxed.

And in the autumn of 1914, soon after the beginning of the war, came the entirely unexpected blow of

the death of his youngest brother, Father Hugh Benson, at the height of his eager and crowded career. Arthur, in the book that he soon afterwards devoted to Hugh's memory, has described how he was suddenly summoned by the news of his brother's illness to Manchester and how he was with him when he died. They had been friends, even intimate friends—outspoken, argumentative, disagreeing violently, always enjoying each other's society. Except opinions they had much in common; they were alike in their quick humour, in their facility and curiosity, in their power of attracting and attaching other lives while remaining entirely disencumbered in their own. At Tremans, at Cambridge while Hugh was working there, and at Buntingford, within reach of Cambridge, where he had lived latterly, they saw each other often, and never without enlivenment to both. It was not in either of them to cling greatly to the past or to miss the absent deeply; but perhaps there was no companion more interesting to the elder brother, none with whom he was on easier, happier terms, than this one whom he now lost.

"*Magdalene, January* 11, 1914.—I had a quiet morning, with no thought of church and only thankful there was no chapel. At 1.0 Salter came, and Peel, and Mr. Sylvester Horne, the Congregationalist M.P.—he is a rather handsome man, with a troubled and self-conscious air, but very pleasant and talkative. . . . At 2.15 we went into the court to see Salter go to the sermon as Proctor; he appeared in cassock and tippet, with bulldogs behind, quite a stately little figure. As we went back Horne said to me, 'I must thank you for your many books—you are a kind of chaplain, you know, to many of us!' . . . He seems to have a great effect at Ipswich over his radicals. I am ashamed to recollect so little of his talk, but I can only remember what *I* said, so I won't put it down. He struck me as civil and tolerant in talk, though I fancy he is fierce enough in principle. . . ."

"*January* 21—. To town at 4.30. I went to Whitefield's tabernacle: met a few unknown people in a little ugly room: then was taken to a vast pulpit, where I was left alone—1400 people below and in great galleries. I lectured, standing, for an hour on Lewis Carroll. A timid reluctant audience, and I felt it was all very flat. . . . A little crowd, with an album or two, to see me off, hats raised, polite bows; but it was all a vague and dream-like affair. I was neither nervous nor tired: back by midnight, and to bed. . . .

"Since then, oddly enough, I have had a letter from the Lecture Agency, offering me engagements at £20 a night; the secretary says he hears my Whitefield's lecture was a very great success, that it is the most difficult of audiences and that a person who can hold that can hold anything."

"*January* 29.—I had a tremendous tussle with letters and cleared them off pro tem. Then men to lunch, and biked by Hardwicke and Toft in fair content. Then I wrote a little. Went to Caius, and read a paper on 'Essays' to a large, shy, friendly, appreciative gathering. There were a few questions and I answered with some liveliness. But it isn't quite my line; I'm not myself in a big gathering, and tend to an odious smartness. I liked some of the young men; two of them walked back half the way with me; and it was a pleasant affair.

"Read two *fine* articles in the Quarterly. One by Inge on St. Paul, a very fine brave candid study, full of light—his change of thought and his adventurousness well brought out. Also an excellent article on Samuel Butler, by Desmond MacCarthy—full of good points and interest, though making rather an outcry about his greatness. He was a very ingenious man, with clear, rather perverse ideas—a sharp and humorous critic, but not, I think, a man of much atmosphere."

"*January* 30.—I went to dine with Clarence Buxton, a charming youth, in the University VIII, full of

good temper and kindness. His uncle O'Rorke, an old colleger who was a boy in the school in '85, was there—Jim Butler, Willink, Sedgwick, T. Buxton. . . . I didn't frankly much enjoy it. I tried some elderly sparkling, but I don't do that well; I am extremely self-conscious and shy with younger people who are inclined to listen deferentially and rejoice unto me with reverence. They wanted me to shine and they laughed at my stories; but I felt on the wrong side of the river. They made it as nice for me as they could, but it wouldn't do. The rooms were in Neville's Court, fine panelled places: C.B. a charming host, full of grace and courtesy and entirely simple."

"*February* 1.—A most brilliant, provocative and amusing sermon from Waggett, about reality in life, and the coming democracy; it was *full* of good points and all so easily and finely done—highly artistic. He said in the course of it that he didn't suppose there would be a revolution—only some unbending Tory Head of a House might be hung from a lamp-post. (The Master objected to this afterwards, and Waggett said he was thinking of Shipley!) I'm not sure if such sermons do good; Salter objected to it. It was over the heads of all but the cleverest, and was felt perhaps to be simply fantastic. But it was full of good stuff. . . .

"Then lunch: out with Jones: a lovely spring day, fresh winds and clean skies, the snowdrops out in sheltered shrubberies at Shelford. We talked amiably and gently. Then a scrap of writing. . . .

"Dear me, how I hate Sundays here: days with no point, full of services—I went again to chapel, from which I neither got nor hoped for benefit—and endless twaddle. But I suppose there is something in it; at least one can't work. A long and pleasant letter from Madan, which made me happy."

"*February* 13.—I worked hard at letters all morning. Then off to Oxford: read and dozed and enjoyed the

scene. I like the bit between Bedford and Bletchley, with the low hills to the south. It came on to rain. I drove straight to Balliol, and in a hideous court, climbing high stairs, found Madan in ugly comfortable rooms. His father turned up, very full of talk, and we sate for an hour. . . . Then I had a vision of beautiful houses, old walls, lighted windows, high domes and porticos of crumbling stone. It's an enchanted city—one ought to spend more time there. . . .

"Went to Grove Place, to a funny little shut-in house of Livingstone's, a Fellow of Corpus, with a young self-possessed wife—Sidney Ball, an old Wellingtonian—Schiller, the philosopher, amusing and brisk, once at Eton—and Pye, a nice Fellow of New. We dined comfortably, with strange orange wine, in a little parlour. I liked to hear Schiller and Ball talk a little philosophy; it is pleasant to feel out of one's depth. Then to Corpus —raining hard. The hall quite full of undergraduates, with some ladies. I discerned Geoffrey Madan at a table and caught his eye. Then I spouted an address on education. It was well received; they listened like mice, laughed, applauded me tremendously; a few questions asked, to which I replied as best I could, without any sense of nervousness. . . . Back to hotel and soon to bed: slept fairly, among many far-off bells."

"*March* 2.—My little book on religion grows. It is both frank and shallow, but I have tried to say what I believe in it. . . .

"I went up to the Church House. Our meeting was amicable:* Bishop of Ely, Dean of Wells, Dean of Norwich, Nairne, Mackail: Dean of Wells a little passionate. . . .

"I lunched at the Athenæum. . . . Came down at 7.55 to go with Basil Champneys to the Literary Society, when I found the Archbishop in the newspaper room. He held his hand out and said, 'My dear boy!' in a way which pleased me much. He had been intending to go

* Committee on the revision of the Psalter.

to Grillion's, but he said he would come with us. A big party. . . . I sate by George Trevelyan and found him quite delightful. But I had a very wholesome and rather humiliating feeling of not being quite up to the mark in that mundane assembly, which made me shy and apologetic. . . . They know what is going on, and I do not. I rushed off at 9.30, but missed my train and didn't get in till midnight. Speechlessly bored in the train, cold and alone, and the light too dim to read by."

"*Lygon Arms, Broadway, March* 31.—The hunting man came down to breakfast with a sort of table-cloth apron, so as not to stain his cords: *what* cannot people wear with dignity, if it's only the proper thing! The party of women is galvanised into life and health by the arrival of a stupid hearty man. . . . We lunched, and it cleared up into a softly-shining, hazy, sweet spring day.

"There followed one of the most beautiful afternoons, in every way, that I can remember. We raced across the plain to the village of Grafton, on the skirt of Bredon. A dear old silvery-haired, blue-eyed dame, in a cottage garden full of wallflowers and daffodils, with a pear-tree spread on the wall, in a steep narrow lane, gave us a note of the way, and we were soon on the broad back of Bredon, with dim and rich views every way. They were hunting up there, and the red coats of the huntsmen on the covert-edge were gay to see. We walked on, over soft turf. G.M. was in high spirits and perfectly charming. I did my best to entertain him; and I can only say that of all the young people I have ever known—and the charm of youth increases to me as I get older—he is the very sweetest, most frank, quickest, most sympathetic I have ever known. He is so clever that he understands instantly without any need of comment or of explanation—and his mind seems to run in the same channels as my own. I have never known anything quite like this before; and though he is emotional he isn't any more sentimental than I am.

I don't think I ever talked more openly and naturally of what I believed and didn't believe. It was a really marvellous experience, and I am as grateful for this day as I am for any of the beautiful days of my life. I do not think the impression will ever fade. We sate down on the edge of the hill, above a nice bit of tumbled forest-ground with thorn-thickets; then on to the top, where we made a cache of coins in a limestone boulder, like children. . . . We found the car, and watched a glorious old man in a blue cloak, very old and feeble, with a face like an apostle in an ancient window, big features, large lips, sunning himself. Then back by Elmley Castle: saw one miracle of colour, an old brick dove-cote of the cruciform kind in a farmyard—I never saw richer red, or a more orange-lichened roof.

"Home, tea, work, dinner and cards. But I can't reproduce the extraordinary happiness of the day, nor how the talk seemed to flow out of the real reservoirs of the mind. I am partly, I know, susceptible to the beauty and grace of G.; but it's a fine, rather austere, critical mind, not fluid or subservient, and at the same time with great feeling and wide interests. I can't attempt to recover it—but I felt that he was happy and unafraid, and I don't think he felt it to be a strain. . . ."

"*Magdalene, Easter Sunday, April* 12.—I decided to go to King's—sate in the ante-chapel. . . . A few imbecile, wild, officious people in the nave; one woman eyed a small book in her hand hungrily and intently, and sang wolfishly; a foolish elderly man handed about books; a young man talked and giggled to a young woman. The music was very characteristic—hymns with tubas, like streams of strawberry jam, and gliding intermediate chords, gross, like German cookery. As for the service, there was no mystery about it, or holiness—it was no more holy than a Union Jack—it was loud and confident. But old Smart in F was charming enough, a strange mixture of levity and sweetness.

Altogether it wouldn't quite do; it was very beautiful both to see and hear, but had no wisdom or depth about it. I had no impulse at all to pray or weep. And yet one must not neglect the fact that people come together for it, sit through it gravely, without smiling—even believe in it! . . .

"I had two very feminine letters this morning, full of sweetness, from —— and ——. I see that the way to win women is to ask for their sympathy in calamities which you do not explicitly specify. That evokes at once their curiosity and their sympathy. Is that a cynical remark?—I don't know—I think it is true. Yet I don't undervalue sentiment!

"I felt this morning that though I am happy enough my life is very unsatisfactory. I seem to be floating about experiencing most comforts and prosperities, and yet always on the surface of everything. Love, religion, art, ambition—I have an inkling of all, yet have never dived to any depth or been carried away. I have never been in love; I have abandoned myself to luxurious sentiment, but never 'hungered sore'; I have never really had a personal mystic apprehension of God, never understood art, always at the last moment despised ambition; and the other side of that medal is that I have always been really preoccupied with myself. But how is one to get out of such preoccupation? If any one will tell the human race that, he shall be made a saint. The difficulty is to be on the whole contented, like me—and yet to *know* that nothing has ever been really and vitally experienced, and probably never can be; and yet I can form a better idea of it by observation and imagination than most people. I suppose it is the artistic temperament without the artistic vocation.

"I dined in Trinity at the Easter Feast, in Combination Room—a mixture of state and fussiness! . . ."

"*April* 18.—I went to look at the National Portrait Gallery and fell in with Shane Leslie. . . . I gave him my impressions of Manning—that he was a

small man and unscrupulously set on personal power. Mr. Gladstone always said that if Manning had been made a Bishop at the right moment he would have ended by being Archbishop of Canterbury, and we should never have heard of Infallibility. . . . I strolled round the gallery and saw Millais' portrait of Manning, like an animated skull. Newman very plebeian and feeble. Many very interesting pictures; but what a wretched painter Watts was—many of his portraits are daubs—he came off about once in ten times. Millais' Carlyle is tremendous—such a *peasant*, just like an old apple-cheeked farmer. . . . The worst of the gallery is that the best pictures are of nonentities, like Romney's Cumberland, and the great people are often represented by amateur scrawls. The finest creatures of all, like Shelley and Keats, are the most dishonoured. . . .

"Back to the Athenæum, and fell in with Henry James, very portly and gracious—a real delight. I had tea with him, and he talked very richly. . . . He complimented me grotesquely and effusively as likely to incur the jealousy of the gods for my success and efficiency. He little knows! My books are derided, my activities are small and fussy. I said this, and he smiled benignantly.

"I asked him if he was well. He said solemnly that he lived (touching his heart) with a troublesome companion, angina pectoris. 'But you look well.' He laughed—'I *look*, my dear Arthur, I admit I *look*—but at that point I can accompany you no further. It's a look, I allow.' And so we said good-bye; he shook my hands often very affectionately. I have a feeling that I shall not see him again. . . ."

"*Skelwithfold*, *June* 29.—The Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife killed at Serajevo. It would be absurd to grieve over it. He was a curious, dumb, reserved, uncomfortable sort of man, with plenty of physical courage, but no attractiveness. They are gone anyhow—and I wonder where and what they are.

That is the thing which interests me, and not the little ant-hill we leave behind.

"We started pretty early, and after a dip into Ambleside for parcels we went along by Coniston and the Broughton road. Lunched by a pretty farm; these old thick-walled untidy places, with all their jolly litter and little orchard-closes and stone-stepped granaries and climbing roses, are quite delicious. Then C. and I set off, by Woodland station, among little fields and knolls and copses—very few houses. We found lots of butterfly orchis and pyramidalis with its sweet smell in a marshy patch—and then by a lonely road over fern-covered hills swept by drifting cloud. . . . and finally down to Lowick Bridge, where we found the car: a very beautiful walk, full of character. So home by Brantwood. . . .

"A mass of letters: poor —— writes to condole with me on a savage attack, she calls it, on my writings, in the *Academy*. I should never even have heard of it but for her sympathy. But I'm off my vogue just now, I think. I am supposed to be successful and complacent—and I expect there is an irritating quality about my writings of which I am unaware. They say that I write for Suburbia, and that is partly true. Well, I must maunder on as best I can. . . ."

"*Magdalene, July* 3.—Off to town—cheered, in the midst of such contempt about my books, by a very warm appreciation in the *Bookman* of *Where No Fear Was*. I have settled, I think, not to go on with novels; it isn't my line. —— writes me an insolent letter about *The Happy Threshold*—says it will do me harm and bring in no profit—so much thrown away. I have three whole books on the shelf now, which will be wasted, I fear. But I still pant after glory, and I have an idea that I may still write a good book. My practice is incessant, and I have a use of words; moreover I have heaps of things bubbling in my brain to discourse about. . . ."

"*July* 6.—Lunched at the Athenæum with R. J. Smith* and had a talk about plans. . . . He was very kind and gracious. I talked about money, and happened to say that I wanted money—I was £3,000 overdrawn at the bank. He looked at me for a moment, and then said, 'Ah, you must let me help you in that—let me make you an advance.' This was truly kind—but I explained how it all came about. He then drew from his pocket a tiny notebook, with poetry written in a most minute square hand, almost like printing, with pencil titles scrawled in. The original titles were all personal, like 'Robert to Helen.' This was the original MS. of Emily Brontë's poems, and it gave me a great thrill. I was interested to find in 'Remembrance' that the original reading in the last line but one was 'Once drinking deep of that *delighted* anguish,' with 'delighted' scored out and 'divinest' written in—'divinest' simply *makes* the poem. The scrawled titles were Mr. Nicholls's. R.J.S. asked me if I would edit and write a little preface for a new edition of the poems. I should like to do that. . . ."

"*July* 11.—Rupert Brooke came to dine—very handsome, but more mature since his travels. He has been in America and the South Sea Islands; he lived three months with a chief at Tahiti. We talked of many other things. He told me he had offered to help Quiller-Couch in English next term. . . . It was altogether an easy and friendly evening, and I was conscious of his liking me—he had invited himself. I don't feel *épris* about him, but I think he is simple, clever and charming."

"*July* 12.—P.L., after inviting himself here for a Sunday, calmly says he can't come; he finds, I think, more amusing guests at home. This is the aristocratic handling! I sent him a post-card with a quotation from Boswell—'When the King had said it, it was to be

* Reginald John Smith, of Smith Elder & Co., a friend of A. C. B.'s from his school days and the publisher of many of his books.

so. It was not for me to bandy civilities with my Sovereign.' . . .

"A little letter from Howard Sturgis, vexed at my throwing him over—I was to have lectured at Eton, but I am let off—and saying he can't come here. There is certainly something rather irritating about me! It is, I believe, that I don't really care about people deeply—and that comes from my finding visits and occasions a great strain. I don't know *why* they are a strain; but I anticipate them with anxiety, and I am tired by them. It is that I can't be serene; I play up all the time. I can't use a friend's house like an hotel somehow; I feel responsible for things going well. This does perhaps help things to go well, but it makes it hard work for me. Unfamiliar rooms, new ways, unknown servants—all these weigh on my mind. But it is an unamiable quality—and I pay for it."

XIII

1915—1917

The war found Arthur Benson no more prepared for it, intellectually, emotionally, than it found many another, and indeed in some ways he was less capable than most of discovering how to think or feel in the presence of the catastrophe. The world outside his own had meant little to him until now; beyond the circle of his work, his habits, his kind, he had seldom looked, and when it was suddenly broken into by the world without his bewilderment was complete. He was not alone, it is easy to remember, in his sense of being left utterly at a loss in the first strangeness of those times, while the whole face of the life that he had known was changed—and life was nowhere more swiftly changed than at Cambridge, in a place founded upon the concourse of youth and now bereft of its youth at a stroke, from one day to another. And yet, though to one so fixed in his familiar ways the stroke might seem cataclysmic, nevertheless it was a man like Arthur Benson who could in a manner most readily adjust himself, perhaps, to the new terms upon which life was now to be lived. He had for so long fitted his days and years to a precise pattern that in their outer figuration they soon fell again into its lines. There was plenty to be done within it, even now; Cambridge was to be kept alive until its youth returned to it, and to this, the evident task of a man in his position, of his age, he gladly addressed himself. It was a practical work, and it occupied him to the

full. As to thinking and feeling in such times, that was another matter, and to him—as again to many another—a far more difficult. He never mastered it, and before long he was content to drop the problem; the war, it always seemed, left no mark on him at all. He worked away as usual, writing, lecturing, attending to the business of his many committees and syndicates; and though Magdalene, like other colleges, was now practically empty of undergraduates, it was presently to be repopulated by successive batches of officer cadets, quartered at Cambridge for courses of instruction, and he gave and got much pleasure in welcoming and entertaining them as they passed.

Two events befell him in 1915, both of them closely affecting his life, and the first of them a surprise so remarkable and so felicitous that I am glad to believe the story may be told without indiscretion. For some time past he had been in constant correspondence with an American lady, personally unknown to him—a reader of his books, living abroad—with whom a friendship had grown and prospered, always by letter, until there were few of his friends on the spot who entered more fully into the interests and occupations of his life. This lady now put to him a request; it was that he should accept from her the gift of a considerable fortune—it was no less—to be used by him in any manner and for any purpose that he preferred. An offer so generously conceived might have been impossible to accept; and at first, deeply as he was touched by such a signal of goodwill, he felt that he could only refuse it. He did refuse it; but it was repeated, and again repeated, not with generosity only, but with such considerate grace that at length the gift passed from the one to the other as simply as a birthday present between old friends. It had a double result. It meant that from now onward he could indulge his liberality to his heart's content, enlarging his schemes for the benefit of his college while he lived, providing for their maintenance after

his death. And also it meant that his unseen friend, during his later years, held a place in the intimacy of his daily life which no one else approached; for no one else was so uninterruptedly his companion in everything that he thought and did and planned to do. They never met at all; but the perceptive sympathy of this lady, joined with that of her family, appears henceforward as a recurring note in the diary to the very end.

The other change in his state, this year, came with the greatly-mourned death of Stuart Donaldson, Master of Magdalene since 1904—who on October 24 was seized with sudden illness while he was ministering in the college chapel and died within a few days. There never was a man of more genial charm and more transparent goodness than Donaldson, and he left for his monument the enhanced name and fame of Magdalene, which in so large a measure was due to his devotion and enthusiasm. There could be little doubt in any mind as to his successor; and before long Lord Braybrooke, in whose hands the appointment lies, had offered the mastership to Arthur Benson. In the war-time depletion of the university the change made no great difference in his duties; but it pleased him to feel that he was welcomed to the dignity by the whole college, and congratulated by all his friends.

Two volumes of collected essays, *Where No Fear Was* and *Escape;* the tale, or imaginary portrait, called *Father Payne*; the sketch of his brother Hugh, and the *Life and Letters* of his sister Margaret: these were his chief publications during the first three years of the war. He also put forth, under stricter anonymity than usual, a little volume of reflections in war-time, *Meanwhile*. This last was one of several small books, of different dates, which escaped notice and were never generally identified as his work. There were many of his more popular books that he attempted to disguise in the same way, though without success, and it may be wondered why he cared

as he did to court concealment of his name. Perhaps he hardly himself knew why; but it came back, no doubt, to that odd discrepancy between the man whom his friends knew and the author whom his public knew, and to some distaste for an inconvenient mixing of the parts. Friends who did not read his books, a public that knew nothing of him personally—such was his choice; and though in both respects his choice was denied him, he continued hopefully to bury his head in anonymous publication. But it was only when his books, as in this case of *Meanwhile*, attracted no attention at all that the blank title-page was any shield to his identity.

"*Magdalene, February* 5, 1915.—A free day: many letters and much controversy. . . . More and more I feel that my mistake has been to philosophise about the war. I don't see widely enough or know enough. My only chance is to go on at my own business. The war is a cosmic affair, and I am an individualist. The papers delude one into thinking that one takes a cosmic view. The *only* help is to work away at one's own limited range. To try to take a wide view merely means that one becomes diluted and weltering. It is as if a man gave up shoemaking to reflect about the war. Let him make the best shoes he can! . . ."

"*April* 21.—Off early. . . . I read *The Joyful Wisdom* (Nietzsche), but felt neither joyful nor wise. London was very beautiful, so full of light and colour. Wrote letters at the Athenæum. . . .

"I lunched with Henry James, who kept on being entangled by voluble persons. . . . H.J. was very tremendous; he looks ill, he changes colour, he is dark under the eyes—but he was in a cheerful and pontifical mood. He ate a plentiful meal of veal and pudding, but he spoke to me very gravely of his physical condition and his chronic angina. . . . We went down together, and he made me a most affectionate farewell. He is slower and more *soigneux* in utterance than ever,

but leaves a deep impression of majesty, beauty and greatness. He said that his life was now one flurried escape from sociability, but he valued a glimpse of me.*

"I had a little talk to Hardy, who was in town and spoke affectionately of Magdalene. . . . So I was well entertained.

"An hour of business with Welsford, who gave me tea. Walked to Liverpool Street; the city was very sunny and delightful, looking in the absence of all dirt and smoke more like a little country town. So to Cambridge. . . .

"A great pile of letters. I come back rather tired by my holiday. I meant not to write, and I have written copiously. I dislike taking up this stupid and meaningless business over again. I want quiet and freedom and relief from feeling the pressure of ugly spiteful hostile elements in the world. One can't escape them, I suppose, except by a sort of drowsy serenity—but that, for me, contains other dangers. I don't see my way clearly at present. . . . And yet I feel a certain potentiality inside me, as though I had things which I could say and do, if I knew how! . . ."

"*Skelwithfold, June* 29.—I have enjoyed my time very much; but I have had enough, I think. I want to get back to work. . . . Writing is my business, not administration or teaching. I don't do it very well, but it's the one thing in life for which it seems worth while making arrangements and even making sacrifices. It's the *congenial* thing. I tend more and more to group my life round it; and all the other things are simply diversions or distractions or contrasts or reliefs. This applies to all my college work and administrative work. The truth is that writing is a *passion*, and it is worth while sacrificing everything else to it. It's a hard mistress in some ways, and it gets me into rows; but it is more and more clear to me that it is my real life, through which I see

* This was their last meeting. Henry James died in February, 1916.

and view everything else—even friendship, even death.

"I had a talk with A. who regretted I hadn't gone to Eton—thought I organised and commanded easily—evidently thinking that to give up such faculties for writing was a mistake, almost a sin. It shows, of course, how little is thought of my writing—but I don't value any such success at a pin's point beside my writing. I live first to shape thought into word. The thought may be weak and the word garish, but like Pitman in *The Wrong Box* I am an enthusiast, I am aiming higher. . . ."

"*October* 4.—In the afternoon I mooned out against a high wind to Bottisham and Swaffham Bulbeck—it is a pretty region. Wrote a little more at *Meanwhile*—but it is finished; Murray is to publish it secretly. But I haven't a subject and I want one badly; I am rather stale—full of vague ideas, but I want a definite one. Dined alone off a cold duck, and read Martindale's* chapters, which are very good. It shows Hugh in all sorts of vivid lights, mostly by quotations from letters. His intensity comes out, his extraordinary lack of insight about people, his power of extrication. Hugh's hardness was a strange thing. . . . He was an artist of a fiery amateur kind; he wanted to express himself in a dozen media. But it was the expression he liked. . . . His prayers, offices, meditations were, I believe, all part of the game. I don't mean he did not make moral choices—indeed I think he was feeling his way to a fine and simple way of life, something much finer than the Catholic way. . . . He loved Catholic controversy; but his religion was one of artistic values, I believe."

"*December* 9.—At ten o'clock I went to chapel with Gaselee and we took down the mourning—purple cloth on the Fellows' stalls, with cords, and curtains in the Master's stall. Arranged the ceremony and talked over the business of the College Meeting. . . .

* *Life of Monsignor Robert Hugh Benson*, by C. C. Martindale, S.J.

"At 2.10 we put on our gowns and went to the library. All the Fellows were there, Salter in khaki. . . . At 2.15 Jacob shouldered the mace, and we walked in, two and two, Braybrooke and myself last. I showed B. to the stall on the Master's right, and then took the President's stall. Peskett then read the Deed, from the stall on my left; a menacing document, requiring and enjoining the Fellows to receive me. Then, in a tone of resignation, he read the sentence I had written, "We, the Fellows of Magdalene, receive and accept you, A.C.B., to be and become Master of this College." Then, still using my form of words, he required me to promise to obey the Statutes. I repeated the form of words and promised obedience. Then I stepped out into the gangway; and Peskett, following me, took my hand and placed me in the Master's stall. . . .

"It was like a strange and pleasant little dream, so short, simple, and orderly. . . . Then I saw Braybrooke off, and then Monty—I was glad he was there. I thought of our old walks at Eton together and our old hauntings of chapel and St. George's; it seemed strange that he and I, as Provost of King's and Master of Magdalene, should thus have a charming little fulfilment of old dreams. But now it seems like a beginning rather than a fulfilment.

"Then the College Meeting began. . . . It was all very peaceful and harmonious, everyone in the friendliest of moods. I think we all felt a great relief that we were not having to welcome a stranger to rule us. We had tea, then sealed a document, and I signed the book as Master. Then back to my study, and wrote letters. At 7.45 to hall; only a few undergraduates: but the servants had set out all the plate and I had provided champagne. All the Fellows and the chaplain present; we had a most friendly meal. I sate between Peskett and Ramsey at the end of the table, and read grace (wrongly). Then we sate upstairs and talked, and at 9.15 broke up. A very happy and peaceful day for me, full of goodwill and kindness. . . . "

"*December* 10.—Had very strange dreams. It was a great open-air party, in the dusk, at Wellington College, in the Lodge Garden. Geoffrey Madan was there, in uniform, very slim and graceful and much fêted by everyone. He gave me a little smile, and I felt, 'What a comfort that we know each other and that I need not pay court to him.' Then followed a play, and I was asked to take part. I hummed and hawed, but G.M. came up behind me, leaned on my arm a moment and said, 'I hope you will—just to please me.' So I consented, and had a scene where I was an elderly enchanter, like Prospero, with a young and beautiful girl, like Miranda. This dialogue was a part of it:

P. Wilt hear a secret?
M. Ay, I love secrets.
P. I will tell thee on a May morning. It is a charm! Wilt hear a tale?
M. A merry tale?
P. Nay, there are no merry tales.
M. A sad one, then?
P. Nor sad neither. Merry and sad are for gods, not men.
M. What tales else are there?
P. Real tales, girl!
M. What is it to be real?
P. To be empty! Things have no bottom in them. We fall through them into the void.

'I woke at this moment, and the dialogue was so firm in my mind that I scribbled it down. . . . "

"*Tremans, January* 3, 1916.—I wrote a bit, and then drove in the victoria, very slowly, to the Bryces.* There were gleams of sun: artillery practising on Ashdown and an awful mess made of the heather. The views from Hindleap are enchanting—the soft purple of the leafless woods, the ridges to the south, with interspaces of soft shade and flying smoke, most lovely. The house is a

* Viscount Bryce, O.M., died in 1922.

funny high-minded little place, like a professor's house in Grange Road. A very donnish drawing-room, prim and useless, with china and sea-shells in white compartments. . . . Bryce is enchanting, so old and crumbling and hairy, but so simple and sweet-tempered and kind. . . . He walked briskly off with me, in thick shapeless grey clothes and a funny black hat. There was a fine sunset coming. We went through his pines; the garden careful, but lacking in charm. He walked very quickly, down to Twyford. . . . Then he said he must get back, said how much he had enjoyed seeing me, asked me to propose myself at any time, his old battered face all alive with kindness and sweetness. He is a dear old boy and evokes my very real admiration and affection. That is what I would become—simple, modest, kindly, full of gentleness. . . . "

Something has been said on an earlier page of the mixture of feeling which for more than ten years had kept him away from Eton. If there had once been a trifle of bitterness in that feeling it had long since evaporated, but he had formed the habit of refusing to see the place again, and only an urgent call could have made him break it. The call came in this year. His old friend Cornish, Vice-Provost of Eton since 1893, now ill and infirm and not far from his end, wished to see him, and he went to Eton accordingly for the day's visit described in the following extract. The habit, thus broken, was fortunately not resumed; he was seen at Eton again before long, staying with Ainger, and in later years yet again.

"*April* 3, 1916.—A memorable day. It was a fine spring morning, but I was much depressed at what was before me. . . . To Paddington by 11.15; the landscape more and more familiar. Then we were at Slough, and then gliding over the viaduct and looking all the familiar buildings in the face. The Castle very grand, but a house opposite the Curfew Tower gone, like a gap in teeth. I got out feeling rather dizzy with emotion,

but like a *revenant*. Drove down in soft sunshine along the old street; the first sight of the boys in their ridiculous dress—yet looking so handsome and fine, many of them —moved me a good deal.

"I certainly couldn't have had a sweeter day to revisit the old affair: twenty-seven years of my life—i.e. exactly half, so far—spent there. I had some happiness there as a boy, but no experience, and as a master some experience and not much happiness. But it isn't my native air at all. It represents an aristocratic life, a life pursuing *knightly* virtues—chivalry, agility, honour, something Spartan. I am not like that at all; I like the poetical, epicurean, tranquil, semi-monastic life. I haven't the clean fresh sinfulness of the knight; I am half bourgeois, half monk. I was never big enough to embrace and overlap Eton. This could be done by a large-hearted and fatherly man, because it has the petulant and inconsiderate faults of youth; and such an one could have extended to it a fatherly and amused tolerance. But I was always a little afraid of it and its mockery, without ever respecting its ideals. I was glad to get away. Now that I go back after a gap, I see its pretty paces and ornaments—it bounds along like a greyhound—it has no virtues, only some instincts.

"I looked in at Luxmoore's house. . . . Then through Brewer's Yard, up the shallow staircase of the kitchen, by hall—the old sights, the old light sudden warmths and coolnesses, the old smell of what?—bread and beer, I imagine.

"Then into the Vice-Provost's. I was shown to the drawing-room. There to my surprise was dear Cornish —I had thought of him as bedridden, but he was dressed and much as usual, sitting in a chair, with his thin legs so oddly hinged. He didn't even look ill. . . . He shook hands and talked easily and discursively—his voice rather low, and with a thickness of intonation which made him not easy to hear always—with allusions and quotations and flights, all in the old way. Mrs. Cornish, with mysterious velvet streamers tied beneath her chin

(attached to what?—I can't think), had a witch-like air, but very benevolent and amiable and full of plans and consideratenesses. Presently men came and took Cornish out of his armchair and put him in a carrying-chair. . . . He said to me with a smile, 'It is so strange to be carried about in a tray!' I said, 'Okes never minded it.' 'No,' he said, 'it was so much more normal for old people then.' We saw him put in a bath-chair, drawn by a little boy. I walked beside him, and we went out of cloisters into the playing-fields. . . . Margaret would have left him, but he called out loudly that she must return. 'Three is the best number—I have always preferred three—it allows one to be dummy!' . . . Saw the lean determined figure of Ainger moving far ahead. Lots of new buildings at every turn—and always the same charming drift of boys, like fine bloodstock, saluting Cornish respectfully and looking at him curiously, not sympathetically at all. I remember seeing old Dupuis drawn about, and how I looked at him, hardly dreaming that he didn't prefer it, or that he had ever been or felt young like me.

"We came in to lunch; Ainger joined us. We found Walter Durnford looking over papers in the library; and indeed, all the time there were so many confused talks and interviews with so many people that I can keep little account of them.

"We had lunch—oysters, cutlets, macaroni—excellent. Poor Cornish sate by the fire apart, bungling over his own affairs, hardly heard. We at the table talked away. Then I had a few words with Mrs. Cornish, who so hoped Hugh Macnaghten might be Vice-Provost. . . .

"Mrs. Cornish spoke very curiously about Cornish. She said, a little sharply, that he thought so much about ultimate problems—death, immortality. 'A man ought surely to have found a solution by his age,' said Mrs. Cornish, with that acrid ring in the voice one knows. Then she went on, 'He has always aimed too much at tranquillity—his books are always about tranquillity.'

'Yes,' I said, 'but with decided tenacity and even combatancy in his own handling of life.' She looked at me penetratingly and said, 'Yes, that is true—Frank has that.' She shifted her ground a little. 'He wants to spare himself suffering—he doesn't believe in suffering—he says it has a bad effect on him.' Then she added, 'He doesn't understand its *mystical* effect, its effect on life, its outward flow, even when it is silent, unseen, unsuspected. What do you think?' (with sudden ferocity). She went on to say that he had been frightened by doctors, did not read because of sensations in his head, liked being read to—Walter Scott and Dickens (very scornfully)—'We don't keep up, you see!' . . . She spoke bravely and even interestedly about all. . . .

"In the playing-fields we saw, on Poet's Walk, a white-haired woodman, wielding an axe over the prostrate trees. 'Who is that fine-looking old man?' said Mrs. Cornish. A group of boys were watching him curiously and derisively. It was Edward Lyttelton! . . .

"Well, Eton seemed to me like a curious dream—rather heavenly—light, warmth, beauty, kindness—but not real at all: a good deal of sadness, too, the old trees fallen and the old men falling, though Luxmoore and Ainger seemed hearty and strong. But the sight of Cornish, in a tiny dark study, no book or pipe, alone, by a dying fire, seemed to me full of disgrace—*an enemy hath done this*, I felt."

"*Magdalene*, *May* 12.—I had beautiful dreams of Maggie, smiling and gracious, and full of little ironies and fine sharp touches. . . .

"Up to town: met W. P. Ker, the great professor, at the Athenæum, who asked me to lunch with him. He is a curious little fellow, red in nose and cheek, with a strange network of minute congested veins: a twinkling eye and a much-controlled thin mouth, infinitely dry. We tried to secure a double table, but all were full. 'We must be sorry to find every one so *greedy*,' said Ker.

A mild man, the colour of freshly-made milk-cheese, came up, just as we had found a table covered with débris—'evidence of a deceased lobster!' said Ker mournfully. . . . Ker and I discovered we were each lecturing at 5.30. 'It's hard that we should be the only two people in London who may not hear each other,' he said. He ate and drank freely—'a large glass of golden sherry.' He told a story of a young Irish priest, chaplain to an Archbishop, who lunched with a politician and Father Healy. The chaplain talked very intelligently about the Irish problem. The politician said, 'Do you tell all this to the Archbishop?' 'Not I,' said the chaplain. 'Why not?—what would he say?' 'He would probably say, "Go to Hell!"' The politician, rather shocked, said to Healy, 'You know the Archbishop—is he the sort of man to say that?' 'No,' said Healy, 'not at all. I have known him thirty years, and drunk or sober I never heard him say such a thing!'

"We promised to meet again at the Athenæum. Ker is a dry vintage, but undeniably refreshing, though I fear his acumen. . . .

"Then I went off with Huxley for a word. The statue of Florence Nightingale has been enclosed in a structure of laurel, and a flat cake of yellow flowers put behind her head—meant for a halo, but looking like an odd umbrageous hat. The attempts of the English to honour people are very infantile. . . .

"To the Royal Institution—much crowded. Found Sir James Dewar, who was pleased at the full audience. Hung about disconsolately. Phil Burne-Jones arrived, very pleasant and amusing. . . . A tiresome military man came up, who asked questions, didn't listen to answers, and went on saying 'yers, yers,' long after one had finished. . . . Then I was led in. Quite full—and I discoursed for an hour on Vulgarity to a very attentive audience. . . .

"Dewar carried me off to see his great soap-bubbles blown in glasses in a great vague laboratory. I was

much bored by long explanations of these toys. The scientific mind seems to me curiously childish; it was like a child explaining its games. I am not interested in scientific processes, only in results. . . . Caught the 9.45, and back late."

"*Tremans, September* 15.—We went off to lunch with Lord Bryce: found him in an incredible old suit of grey clothes with a large pattern. He was most delightful and full of talk. . . . Geoffrey related some of his Mesopotamia experiences. Lord Bryce got up, stood in front of him, heard him open-mouthed like a child—a fine contrast, the old worn gentle ill-dressed hair-tufted man and the slim young soldier. We sate in the library. It is a comfort to feel Lord Bryce to be neither ambassador nor statesman, but an honest don like myself. He walked with us through the garden and down into the forest, to set us on our way: parted most affectionately. . . ."

"*February* 19, 1917.—Went to Trinity Lodge to decide the Chancellor's English Medal. The Master received us, in gown and cassock: such a really beautiful sight, his gracious smile, his fatherly look at me, his white hair. He looked well and serene, but he was much troubled by breathlessness. 'I puff and blow in so singular a manner!' he said. The butler gave him coffee, pouring it into a saucer. We sate down, the Vice-Chancellor in a very odd old armchair, which turned out to be Porson's own chair: Henry Jackson on his left, deaf, red-faced, rugged, voice very shrill. . . . The great portraits round the room glimmered richly—Thompson, Wordsworth, Whewell—and I seemed to see gods ascending out of the earth. The Master (who was not on our Board) sate apart at a table and waited. He closed his eyes, he seemed to be slowly consuming some species of lozenge; his face was brightly lit up, and I thought I had never seen so lovely a picture of patient age and dignified courtesy. Sometimes he shook his head or smiled to himself, and sometimes his lips moved

and I thought he was praying. It was entirely beautiful; and I do not know why, but it came strongly into my head that I should never see him again; he was at the end of his course, and living in happy memory and certain hope."

"*June* 13.—Up to town for Holt Governors'-meeting: fierce heat: train held up at the edge of London in the marshes, by the river Lea, and a man came along and told us that Liverpool Street station had just been bombed. We crawled in very late. The station roof much damaged: an immense crowd, pale, silent, not in any panic, but interested. The bombed platform was guarded, and ambulances went in and out. I saw a shrouded figure carried out: the officials grave and absorbed. I was unpleasantly aware of a strong current of imagination and feeling about, which affected my mind unpleasantly: I mean that I felt deprived of my independence, and strangely merged in a tide of emotion. I have never felt it before; but I was conscious that if an impulse had seized the crowd it would have seized me too, and I should have rushed with it and acted with it. . . . I was taken in tow by a very friendly official, who tried to get me a taxi and extracted a tipsy driver from a pub, who said, 'No, I can't take you—it's too dangerous, and I feel out of my mind. I live near Liverpool Street station and I don't know what may have happened; I must get back home.' But he returned to the pub. My official was vexed and said, 'That's not how to behave—it isn't a time to drink.' . . . It was awfully hot: crowds in streets, much broken glass everywhere: many streets guarded by police and special constables—in one place a group round a fallen man. The crowds were great—not eager or excited, but determined to see. A balloon went over, and it was strange how the street suddenly seemed to *whiten*, all faces being turned to the sky. . . . The whole affair was very strange, and the sense of obsession—not coming from any idea of danger, though the raiders might have returned, but from the tense emotions of the crowd—was a strain. . . ."

"*June* 23.—Ainger gently said that I must come again because he was becoming a very old man—yet he wears the best of all. I feel very tired; I seem to have had a wild sort of waltz or cotillon through Eton; but it's a happy place—it seems to me happier than I remember it. . . . I feel as if I had been much welcomed and much blest—and that's surely enough. . . .

"Then to Nicholson. He painted a little* and took me to lunch at the Savile. . . . Then to an exhibition in Bond Street and saw Nicholson's [portrait of] Smuts, together with many other pictures—odd and pleasant, ugly and strange, bright and dull. A very odd one by Sims—three girls in white supporting an evidently intoxicated elderly lady in black; they are in a meadow laid with green linoleum; from a bush hard by projects a stiff human image, as if carved in *camphor*—and the whole is called 'Remembrance' . . .

"The fashion now is for bright pictures. I begged Nicholson to explain things to me, but he laughed mockingly. 'What are we to do with these?' I said, in a room of pictures with colours like strong stenches. 'Well, not look at them!' says Nicholson. . . .

"We went back, and Nicholson painted. He said many interesting things about the problems of real painters: the reduction of accessories to a minimum—the constant simplification of all redundance—the concentration on the real subject—the choice of subject: a picture isn't a real thing—it's an illusion, a grouped thing—it's as definite a thing as a violet or a rose. . . . These things are not intelligible to me, but I have the agreeable sense of being in the presence of a mystery. . . ."

And now came the first warning of a blow which he had clearly foreseen as a possibility—a renewed

* This portrait was not finished. In 1924 Mr. W. Nicholson painted the portrait of A. C. B., now in the Fitzwilliam Museum (see Diary, May 21, 1924).

attack of the neurasthenia from which he had been entirely free for seven years and more. He tried to hope that the cloud of depression would pass, but it was soon clear that the trouble was serious; it was, in fact, the beginning of an illness that was to prove far more acute, more baffling and more obstinate than the last.

"*Tremans, July* 2.—A most disagreeable experience. I awoke before five o'clock, after dreams of incredible vividness, variety and rapidity, in much agitation and depression. An attack, sudden and unexpected, of my old friend, I fear. However, I went off to sleep again; but the same hideous pressure of visions, not in themselves painful or agitating, but succeeding each other with such feverish rapidity and all so entirely pointless. Thus I made my way, it seemed, for hours, against an immense but quite good-natured crowd of boy-scouts and undergraduates in a street of a town, just slipping along as I could, the crowd streaming past. An infinite series of similar quite meaningless adventures, as though the imaginative part of the brain had lost its escapement and were whizzing away like a watch without a regulator. I woke again about 8.0 with that unpleasant sense of nausea in the mind, which was so characteristic of my melancholy illness. I got a little better and was just nervous and depressed—able to read with attention and even with interest, but with darkness hovering on the outskirt of the mind. . . .

"I have had no warning of this, except that I have been a little dull and sad. . . . What I have done is to overwork a good deal of late, and I must try to lie fallow a bit, with mild employment. I'm unfortunately very bad at resting. . . ."

"*Magdalene, July* 8—We walked to Girton, rain dripping; and then I returned, played organ, had tea—with a storm brewing inside. However, when I sate down with a life of Charles Kingsley at 4.45 I only had three quarters of an hour of misery, and not of the

worst kind; and it cleared off, leaving me capable of thinking and writing. It is a very physical thing; one's mouth gets dry, and the wheels of thought fly round; an awful hurry seizes on one. One turns pages, can't read, and then the agonised stupor comes on—a real neuralgia, no doubt, only so much more mysterious because no active pain. No wonder it seems like an evil spirit—but an evil spirit would not pay a regular call after tea every day! I have really had a very fair day. Of course I may be going slowly down into darkness—the leisureliness of the process is fearful—but I don't *feel* like that. . . .

"As I sit the cool air from the window and the twittering of birds is mildly pleasant. But I mustn't boast; though I should indeed sing unto the Lord a new song, as well as mend my ways, if I found myself able to keep my head above water as well as I have on the whole to-day. I certainly don't look unwell.

"The variations of this vile malady are amazing. I dined alone, talked with Hunting, then read the life of Jowett with much peaceful enjoyment. To bed. Woke at 2.0 after vivid dreams, and could not sleep: the brain preternaturally active. I made up tunes, poetry, prose, the thoughts diving and darting about, really hardly under control: very painful in a way, but I wasn't at all depressed. But as I got sleepier, at each dip into sleep a thousand curious images darted into my mind: one only I will describe—a large green bottle, hanging in space by a series of linked chains—no meaning whatever. There was no terror or agitation about these. Suddenly without any warning an awful access of horror and despair, so that I wondered if my end was come. I got up, lit the lights, and almost instantly felt that I was all right again—as if something had repelled the invasion and, so to speak, sealed the sepulchre. . . ."

"*August* 18.—What it means to sit here, the soft wind rustling, butterflies poising on the buddleia, apples dangling, the garden I love beyond, the life I love

all about, and have this horror over me, can't be even faintly guessed. Yet a man may live so for years, and I seem built for long life. It separates one from everything and everybody. Affection fades before it; its only life is to say, 'I should love this and do that, if the pain were away.'"

XIV

1918–1925

More than five years were to be endured before happiness returned to him—five years that shall here be rapidly passed over. This visitation of his illness was of the same character as the last; but he was now an older man, he had used his health and strength more recklessly than ever in his incessant labours, and the despair into which he was plunged was proportionately deeper. Shortly after writing the words last quoted he left Cambridge, on the advice of Dr. Ross Todd, for a nursing-home near Ascot, where he remained for the greater part of the next two years; and it was not until the spring of 1920 that he could be persuaded to face the return to Magdalene. Even then, though he was physically well and strong, his agitation of mind was still so great that he could only bring himself by very slow degrees to resume a portion of his work. Little by little he made his way back toward normal life, perpetually urged and encouraged by his doctors and his friends. Every step was taken with grievous effort; and after each had been accomplished he was able to acknowledge that it was a step forward, but the next that lay ahead seemed never any easier, and he was always convinced that utter disaster was not far off. During most of this time the diary was laid aside; there was nothing to be said of the passage of the days save that all alike were misery. No one about him, watching his perseverance, could doubt that his mind and will would at

last bring him through to recovery; but the years were very long, disappointments were many, and almost to the end the darkness of his distress seemed unrelieved. Then, as before, like the rolling up of a curtain, it suddenly and completely disappeared; all his old ease of work and enjoyment came back to him with a rush, and he was himself again. This was at the beginning of 1923.

Meanwhile, in the early days of his illness, he had suffered the greatest loss of his lifetime. His mother had died in 1918, at Tremans, bequeathing to the multitude of her friends a memory uniquely treasured. Whoever knew Mrs. Benson has known goodness that was all gaiety, wisdom that was all charity, brilliance that was all large-hearted humanity; her virtues had the lightness and brightness of charming talents, her talents had the grace of virtues. Her last years had brought her many sorrows and anxieties, but her spirit to the end was quick with youth, and her friends mourned for her and missed her, not as one dying in the fulness of age, but as one whom old age could never touch. Of her six children only two survived her—with a third, Miss Lucy Tait, who since the old Lambeth days had lived with her and been as daughter and sister in the family. And so they now said good-bye to Tremans; and to Arthur, in the worst of his unhappiness, the loss of his mother and his home might well seem to cut him off from the last hope of recovery. When he returned to Magdalene and began to take some part in the life there and to see his friends, the gap was even more to be felt; without Tremans, and all that Tremans had meant, the course of the year was difficult indeed. The house of his cousins at Ambleside was still the resource it had been for so long; but he needed some place of his own away from Cambridge, and with his brother's help he most fortunately found it. Mr. E. F. Benson had a tenancy (for part of each year) of Lamb House, at Rye—Henry James's home for the last twenty years of his life, and still in the possession of his

nephew. An arrangement was made by which Arthur, sharing his brother's tenancy, had the use of the house for the vacations; and this solved his difficulty so well that the familiar country inns, Burford and Broadway and the rest, knew him no more. His busy holidays—very busy they at once became again, as soon as he was well—were passed henceforward at Lamb House, where a succession of friends were invited to stay with him, one by one, till it was time to go back to Cambridge for the scarcely busier term.

In the supreme relief of discovering that he could once more enjoy the world he made light of the physical disabilities by which, for the first time in his life, he was now considerably hampered. Gout attacked him, his habit of exercise was much interrupted; he scorned to practise a careful regimen and treated his growing bulk as nothing but a jest. His lecturing, his preaching, his " Fishmonger days " in London—in none of which he would abate a jot of his old energy—undoubtedly cost him perilous exertion; but for sixty years he had had too much bodily health to believe that it could seriously fail him. The mastership of his college brought its full measure of work, and more, in the immense re-invigoration of the university after the war. Moreover his turn for the Vice-Chancellorship would come before long; and even this prospect did not deter him from accepting the office of " Renter Warden " of the Fishmongers' Company in 1924, entailing yet higher and more onerous dignity to follow. It was impossible for him to economise his force, so great was his pleasure in lavishing it. His last two years of life were perhaps his happiest; his position pleased him, he loved the daylong rush of work and sociability in which he lived, and there was never the smallest cloud of the old depression upon his mind.

The first sign of returning hope had been to find that he could write. He began to amuse himself by translating epigrams from the Greek Anthology, and

he published his versions in 1923 under the name of *The Reed of Pan*. And then, as with the release of a long-pent stream, book after book poured from him, far outstripping any possible rate of publication. Two volumes of reminiscence came first, *The Trefoil*, and *Memories and Friends*, each the work of a very few weeks; and after these he turned to fiction again, and wrote (still in 1923) *Chris Gascoyne* and *The House of Menerdue*—the latter inspired by a visit he paid that summer to the haunts of his youth in Cornwall. In 1924 he was still writing novels (*The Canon* has been published since his death). Finally, in 1925, he began a book which ever since his recovery he had promised himself to write, a Memoir of his mother; he finished it at Cambridge in the summer term. Since the beginning of his career he had published about fifty books, and I cannot say how many more he had written. This was the last; and he laid it, after an interval of a quarter of a century, beside the book in which he had first shown his full measure as a writer of prose, the Life of his father.

"*Magdalene, April* 24, 1923.—I enter my sixty-second year in good spirits, not remorseful, interested in life and work. *Thank God!* I had a pile of letters, mostly from kind but relentless women. . . . At 11.0 Peel came, and we walked round, looking at small details—the old pleasure returns. At 1.0 College Lunch: many small points. Walked with F.R.S., who was enchantingly nice—his very best. . . . Wrote. Hall, very friendly. Committee about Reading Room, Ramsey, Peel, Morshead, in my study. . . . I offered £1,500; this is a small thank-offering to my dear and kind colleagues. I drew up a report."

"*April* 26.—Wrote about Rupert Brooke. Dined in Trinity with Lapsley. He ushered me in as the cook brings in the Boar's Head at [Queen's], Oxford—'caput apri defero'; very warm greetings from Bevan, Innes, McTaggart, etc., which warmed my heart. . . .

To Lapsley's great panelled rooms (Henry Jackson's), very bare and noble. A conceited American boy, and the charming de Navarro, son of Mary Anderson, quite delightful.

"I was grateful to Lapsley for restoring me to the world. I didn't like the clothless tables, but the dinner was good and the welcome adorable."

"*May* 13.—Awoke cheerful; breakfast with Sarum.* . . . It was strange to be sitting again with him, after all our years of companionship, and to find him so much the same. . . . At 10.45 I took him in Convocation robes to the Library. We went into chapel, leaving him in the Library. I gave the boys a sketch of his career. Then he came in with verger, stood by my stall, and I admitted him by formula. It was nice to do this to an old friend. Then service, and the boys sang *finely*. He preached an admirable short sermon. . . ."

"*May* 14.—I think St. Clair is a very fine, simple-minded, robust, sensible prelate, and the little veil, pulled down by his long absence in Australia, has flown up again. We seemed like two Eton boys again. He walked in the garden with me, and went off at 11.0, after a wholly joyful visit.

"I had many letters, but callers flowed in. Addis to lunch, a fresh and lively youth. Walked alone; met the dull smiling inattentive Larmor; called on Winstanley; saw but could not catch E. M. Forster, the novelist; met Winstanley again and went to the bowling-green—what a sweet place, but for tea-swilling dons. Then to Library Subsyndicate at Emmanuel. Crawley, a very nice boy, at dinner—and Mallory, who came back to talk. . . . He is absorbed in the League of Nations, and believes too much in his power of inspiring second-rate people by somewhat incoherent thought. But he is a bright and gallant figure, and has much personality.

* Dr. St. Clair Donaldson, Bishop of Salisbury and Hon. Fellow of Magdalene.

"I slept very ill, and I am full of bodily disablements, but filled with levity and interest. I bless God hourly for my release."

"*May* 21.—I strolled out, doddered about, watched the crowd of trippers everywhere trailing wearily round, was pleased and amused by everything. Called on Winstanley in New Court and interrupted him with discursive talk; I couldn't hold my tongue; he came out with me to see me safely off the premises. We excused ourselves by pleading fictitious appointments; and sneaking back again—I couldn't go home, feeling too idle—I met him sallying out again. So we walked to the roundabout, which was looking beautiful, with sad dons and girls at tea. The fountain quite superb, the water tinkling: Laurence hobbling hurriedly in the offing. I went back, and began an idle book of letters, displacing St. Mark. . . ."

"*June* 5.—Went off to town and to Fishmongers' Hall: came in at a Holt Finance Committee, and was made very welcome. . . . Brand more youthful than ever: Eccles, the Headmaster, very portly and resonant. I conducted much of the business. Then came lunch, and a lot of old Fishmonger friends turned up. I was really moved almost to tears by their delightful greetings—felt I had been really missed. . . . Lord Hollenden came and made me a most gracious speech—and so it went on. Then whom should I find next me but the Bishop of Norwich—and *he* looks younger. We had much talk, and I got my own way all along. . . . A memorable day."

"*Magdalene, Oct.* 14.—I went off to the [University] Sermon; my last attendance was in 1883, when Papa preached. We met in the Senate House, and my brother Heads were very gracious; St. John's made tender inquiries—he is a funny sight, with his sanguine laughter-loving face and his white thatch of hair. . . .

"We sloped off, a poor congregation. Mason* began weakly, but there was a fine apostrophe to the Church, in the style of Newman—'Wherefore, my mother, do they prepare for thee a bill of divorcement, that thou art not worthy to be the Bride of Christ?' I looked round. A.'s head was embedded in his chest; B. asleep with a look of uplifted piety, C.'s skull-like head dangling on his thin neck, one of the Bedells asleep, his head pillowed on the other's shoulder. I was aroused by a sharp sound to my left: D., rigid with sleep, snored and struggled. E. below, with gleaming eyes, making mental notes. A disgraceful scene of infinite futility and grotesqueness. We scuffled away. . . .

"Aunt Nora came to tea and I had a long quiet talk with her, much about psychical things. . . . She looked very frail and wise, unhampered by the flesh. . . .

"I forgot to say that chapel [Magdalene] was absolutely full from end to end, all the stalls and many extra chairs. The music was good, but without courage. I was very much pleased by this, and it was a really inspiring sight. I preached on *friendliness*—was decidedly affected myself, and they listened most silently. My voice improved as I went on, and I had no nervousness to speak of."

"*February* 2, 1924—I walked about town, to the Fitzwilliam, Christ's Piece, back by Jesus: very heavy and extremely lame. Then wrote letters with disgust, and went to dine at Trinity. . . .

"I saw a plain pale little man by the Master, whose face seemed familiar—a lifted eyebrow, a little smile, a perky curl of the lip. I said to Parry, 'Can that be the ex-Prime Minister?' 'Yes,' said Parry, 'it is Baldwin; I found him strolling about and asked him to dinner. He is struggling with a hideous task, his list of honours.' Then came grace, very sweetly sung; the Master had said the initial grace in tones like a cataract of tin pots and crockery. Then Parry suddenly said, 'Let us

* Canon A. J. Mason, of Canterbury.

change places.' So I was moved up next the Master, and Baldwin took my hand in a firm grip: 'I have long wished to meet you, as Phil's friend.' . . . Then he said, in reply to some question of mine, 'Yes, I hope I shall get back to ordinary life again. I used to like reading; but this infernal task of mine—fourteen hours a day seeing people and having to be at your best and guarding every word—is a fearful strain.' I said something about 'semina flammae,' and he said, 'Yes, every smallest word is liable to burst into flame.' . . . He struck me as a very good-natured, sensible, able, tired man, but with plenty of stuff left in him, entirely unembittered and healthily detached. . . .

"It is so surprising to me to find myself in this situation of respect. I seem to myself so obscure and secluded; and then suddenly I find myself in touch and on easy terms with these big men. It is an experience that continually takes me by surprise. I feel *radically* obscure, in spite of my bedizened exterior."

"*February* 21.—Rylands to dine. A very quiet friendly evening. I was perhaps a little blurred. He was angelic and full of cheerful details. He can't, however, like my company as much as he seems to. Perhaps he is deferential? I felt both ugly and elephantine, with a great desire to applaud his grace, comeliness and sweet temper. . . . Anyhow it was a very delightful evening. He went at 12.0, leaping into the night. I went to bed, having caught, I think, a fresh cold, and with furious bouts of coughing, awaited the throned dawn of the Pepys dinner.* When I think of the agonies of terror and misery I suffered over this two years ago, and the horrors of 1921 and 1922, it is amazing. . . ."

"*February* 22.—. . . We dressed, and resplendent in red gowns and orders went off, Gosse saying that he felt very ill and miserable. Our company assembled: Lord Exeter, very nimble and kindly, a simple man:

* The annual dinner at Magdalene on the birthday of Samuel Pepys.

Lord Braybrooke, as kind and unreachable as ever: W. Bridgeman, very stout and lethargic and pale-eyed, full of friendliness: Owen Hugh-Smith, in chain and jewel of Fishmongers . . . and various other notabilities, all known to me.

"I led off with Gosse and we took our places. The hall looked very well, rich but homely. We fell to work: Alington next me, very amusing and volatile. . . . Food and wine good and well served: no hitch: behaviour of our undergraduates pleasantly commented on. I said grace, gave 'The King,' and then called on Gosse. He spoke clearly and loudly, with easy flow of words and good gestures: said too much about me, as a wonderful person, to be guarded from overwork by gossamer nets. Then an interesting bit of literary talk about the rise of self-expression, and the friendship of Evelyn and Pepys—no sign of their knowing each that the other was a diarist. He spoke twenty-three minutes. Then an interval for coffee. Then I rose and felt very much at home; Gosse had started them laughing, and I had a lot of almost new and quite funny stories, at which they laughed heartily and hilariously. Then Alington went on, a clever and amusing but disconnected speech. . . .

"I stayed talking in the Library till 12.0. The worst of having made an amusing speech with stories is that the dull men of the company come to one in order to tell one much better stories. . . . I got away at midnight: sate reading till 1.30, and had a night much broken by agonising fits of coughing, but thankful for a really successful gathering."

"*March* 10.—G. Rylands arrived, looking very young, blooming and serene in spite of his efforts. He is acting the Duchess in the *Duchess of Malfi*. We were gay at lunch, but I was rather dazed by the long morning. Then R. and I went off by taxi to Milton: a cold day, with some snow still lying, but a lovely sun, and the fields about Horningsea and the clear river very beautiful: saw many gulls, hawk, wild-duck, etc.

. . . We talked of innumerable things, and came down to Clayhithe. . . . We drove back and he came to tea, but was tired and silent, liking to be with me, not wanting to go and act. But he went off. I wrote a little.

"Winstanley and Ogilvy to dinner, the latter handsome, but positive and rather bored. Winstanley sparkled. To the A.D.C., where I never feel at ease. The play began with faint and sad music by Ferrabosco, very sweet and pathetic. W. said it was the sort of music he would like before his lectures—resignation to a bad job.

"The play was, I thought, detestable. It was well staged, the actors well drilled. But the dresses were fantastic, and there was an air of pedantry—and still worse, a sense of deep unreality. A play where again and again in a tragic moment a man finds time and heart to spout similes and platitudes! Soon the Duchess appeared, very pale, moving with dignity—but I didn't like the painted eyes and the very stiff carriage of the head. Yet when the Duchess was there, there was always a sense of reality. The young husband Antonio was a handsome boy, and the Cardinal was natural; but the lunatic scene was grotesque—and then the murders began. To see Rylands strangled on the stage and put kicking and mewing in a great black coffin was grotesque. Then Wormald, very limp and faint, was strangled, expostulating, and the audience laughed. Then four people were stabbed. The whole thing was sickening, and not redeemed by any art or beauty—the very motive of all this crime obscure. I could hardly believe that this sad stately woman was the young man who had been walking with me in the fields all the afternoon. I got tired and even bored when the Duchess was dead. Ogilvy excused himself, and I came back out of tune with everything. But it was a delightful day."

"*May* 14.—I bicycled alone to Haslingfield and Harlton, and enjoyed it greatly. Then with V. Jones

to King's, to dine. This was delightful. We were received with great kindness. . . . Walter Durnford came to entertain us. We walked in—it was so strange to be there again—and I felt how the romance of my life is centred at King's. Every one was pleasant —Clapham, Wedd, Sheppard, etc. . . . Then we went to Combination Room. Dickinson came to sit next me and we gossiped away. Afterwards Mann came up, half laughing, half crying, took my arm and walked to the gate. He said, 'It was so nice to see you here. I look up the table and I see Walter Durnford sitting there, and I say to myself 'There is a *great gentleman*'—we are all of us well enough in our way, but we are not that—and then I see you beside him and my heart is full.'

"What a *fool* one is! I had thought I was regarded with hostility at King's, and instead I am the welcome guest. I abandoned myself to pleasant reveries."

"*May* 21.—Nicholson came all the morning—but at ten to 1.0 he suddenly said, 'It is finished.' The portrait was thus done in three days, after four previous attempts. I asked him what the difficulty was and he said he did not know. He showed it me. It is a small picture (N. said 'This is miniature painting.') I am sitting in silk gown in a red armchair. I am a stout bilious man, with a heavy jowl and red-rimmed eyes—with the look as if I held a potato in my mouth: rather fine hands, with pointed fingers (my own being spatulate). It is beautifully painted, but all the coarse and bored elements have come to the surface. That is what happens when one sits.* . . ."

"*May* 22.—G.R. at 2.30, very youthful and gay. He professes to be alarmed by Tripos. We ran into floods between Fen Stanton and St. Ives and he was childishly excited; but we put out the magneto and had to get out while it was mended. Went and inspected the floods, the result of a 'cloud-burst' on

* The portrait is now in the Fitzwilliam Museum at Cambridge.

upper ground. Then on to Hemingford Grey: to the church, saw the Gunning grave, the river by the churchyard wall running brown and hoarse. Then through Dendy Sadler's garden, now all grown up: on to Hemingford Abbots, and back by road. My dear boy was quite delightful, full of affection, argument, petulance, reason, fine feeling and whimsicality. I spoke to him with much freedom about many things. But I feel that he is drifting away. He will go to town and get interested in other people, perhaps second-rate people. And our understanding will all fade away. But I *hope* it may be otherwise. It is strange to care for any one so much and yet to accept these possibilities with equanimity. I suppose one learns to expect less."

"*June* 9.—My foot very bad. I got up, however, in good time and limped about. At 12.30 I went to the college photograph, and this I really enjoyed. The boys looked and were so friendly and fresh and gay. I had many scraps of talk with them, and sate finally enthroned between Hunter and Holt. . . . Then drove alone by Wimpole—the avenue very grand—and up the North Road, where by the station I found a little tree-surrounded site, which I once thought of buying, for sale. Indulged in pleasant reveries.

"Came back and went to Emmanuel, having been summoned for a meeting, but found the house full of bright cohorts of ladies ascending and descending. Asked an austere maid where the meeting was. 'There is no meeting that I know of.' Where was the Master? He was out—Mrs. Giles was giving a party. I was very lame, but contrived to get a taxi. Wrote a little at the letter I intend to send round to the undergraduates. . . .

"Desmond MacCarthy came in, and I had nearly three hours of really interesting and flexible talk, an actual interchange and comparison of thought. He has a well-stored and sympathetic mind, and (what is more important in talk) does not store up his leavings, but

gaily follows any attractive by-path. How rarely one gets talk like that here—or indeed anywhere."

"*Lamb House, Rye, June* 26.—Another very hot golden day: letters leisurely: then to Appledore. By Kenardington to Warehorne: a fine church with a great eighteenth century red-brick tower full of white snapdragons: high pews, royal arms, no Anglo-Catholic nonsense. Barham of the Ingoldsby Legends was vicar here. To Ruckinge, a beautiful old church with huge Norman tower on the edge of the marsh. . . . Then down to the marsh. The same odd depression of the fens overtakes me there. Newchurch, a big Tudor place, leaning tower, restored out of all interest—to Ivychurch, a very grand orange-lichened place: no village, about a hundred parishioners. To Brookland with its odd black pagoda, and so home. The sight of the marsh dotted with white sheep as far as eye could see was very rich. A great sea-fog with wind-tost crest over the sea, rather sinister; and as I sit writing I hear the Dungeness fog-horn blowing. They are sheep-shearing everywhere, a pleasant sight. These beautiful remote villages are very attractive. My foot is very tender, and it is as much as I can do to potter into a church. But I'm well and cheerful and enjoy solitude."

"*July* 7.—To the Literary Society. . . . John Bailey very nice: I clasped arms with Newbolt. A small gathering, and the two chairs to my right empty. During soup a tall figure glided behind me and Arthur Balfour sate down. He is lovely to look at: looks about 60, curly, silken, white hair, but so easy and lithe: a little deaf, but full of the old charm. We talked of many things, politicians, books, people. . . . He took down some names of books and said engagingly, 'I can't bear books that haven't a happy ending.' I don't think his talk was brilliant, but it was charming and very modest. He didn't recognise me at first, but soon picked it up. He has a pleasant deference and attentiveness—a really aristocratic manner, no claims, no assertiveness. He

looked very fresh, ate and drank little. . . . Then suddenly his *vis-à-vis*, Bailey, Rennell Rodd, etc., closed in on him like a pack of hungry dogs. . . .

"I fled at 9.50: much bored in train: bed at 2.0."

"*Magdalene, October* 25.—At 7.0 dined with O.F.M. here, and off to Corn Exchange—full from end to end. Seats found near platform. Very orderly. The procession appeared: Frank smiling, shaking hands, quite a little candidate. Keynes (pale as marble) began, an excellent dry speech, not very effective. Then Frank, a good sensible speech, neither petty nor cheap, indicating liberal principles. . . . Then Cope Morgan, a loud fighting speech; really I almost expected to see tonsils and lungs blown from his mouth by his yells; it was too long, and he lost hold, but he had a big reception. Then Mrs. Salter, a *charming* fluted little speech. . . .

"The whole thing filled me with horror. The audience could not understand the simplest point and laughed only at the vulgarest jokes. The idea of being governed by such a democracy is outrageous. I agreed with Coventry Patmore that the Anglo-Saxon in intelligence is only just above the negro. They were orderly and good-humoured, but it was a low affair—the aspersions on fellow candidates sickening. The room was hideous, and the constant singing of 'For he's a jolly, etc.,' was loathsome. I trust I shall never attend a political meeting again. The low mental quality was heart-rending."

"*Lamb House, Rye, December* 31.—We drove out in a cold wind, with flying rain-storms, to Tenterden. Walked, I very slowly, by footpath to Small Hythe. Ellen Terry's cottage is lovely. A great glowing sunset came out, over the flooded valley. In two or three places we drove through water. On the great wet level at Wittersham the waves were running quite high and breaking on the shore. . . .

"So ends a very happy and busy year. I have had a good many ailments, mostly gouty and caused by my

weight (now 19 stone), but none of them in the least disabling to the mind. I don't think I have had a single hour of depression. I have been very happy about the college, my colleagues *most* friendly and conciliatory, the undergraduates extremely delightful and good. I have carried out some pleasant plans—have built parlour, bedmakers' and gyps' common-rooms, reading-rooms, panelled chapel-entry, two fives'-courts, all out of Madame de ——'s money. She and Edward de —— have been constantly and deeply affectionate and sympathetic, and my happiness has much depended upon them. Fred has been a great stand-by. My friendship with R. has rather evaporated owing to his inability to write letters, which freezes me. My breeze with P. blown over. I have published several books and written two complete novels. I have enjoyed the Fishmongers' work. My friendship with Gosse has revived. I have made many speeches and entertained endless undergraduates. Lamb House has been an unspeakably delightful haven of refuge. I take leave of 1924 grato animo."

"*Magdalene, January* 25, 1925.—Called at 6.45, an hour which has no existence for me; dressed in the dark and breakfasted 7.30. Started at 8.0, a misty morning, very little to see anywhere, no colour—a few strings of horses by Newmarket—but the great heaths, the pleasant halls and homesteads and the grey flint churches all gave the comfortable Norfolk atmosphere. . . . We got to Norwich and the Cathedral about 10.45. I met the Dean, Willink, a handsome bustling man, who gave me an excellent seat just facing the Queen, who had a great chair and faldstool, with a chair on either hand, close to the altar-rails. The organ played a grand hilarious Handel piece; then the Corporation with maces came in, and the choir, very picturesque, boys in cassocks and ruffs*. . . .

"The organ began again, and the procession entered from the south door. . . . The Bishop as cool as ever,

* The service was for the dedication of the ancient episcopal throne of Norwich, newly restored.

with the Queen, who had an odd crimson plush hat, of her special shape, and a fur coat; a graceful young man and girl with her. . . . Then the Bishop, a short, dignified, rather beautiful but cold sermon, not well read. Then he went behind the altar and dedicated the throne, which is very high, under the eastern arch—rather *papal* and a little theatrical. A collection for St. Paul's (£100).

Then the Bishop took the Queen down the nave, to show herself; and I, under instructions, went out of the north transept door, where I found a photographer. The Queen, the Bishop, and quite a bevy of pretty nymphs came out. The Bishop seated the Queen, and himself, arranged the nymphs, and added me to the group.

"Then we all stalked in. I found the nymphs in the small upper drawing-room, on the third floor; and while I talked the Queen came in, in a brown mole-coloured dress, not very becoming, extended her hand to me and began to talk about the weather and the ceremony. Then we trooped downstairs to the dining-room, and the Queen made a little gesture with a finger indicating to me the chair next her. It was quite a small party, and very youthful. . . . The Bishop roped me in, and I talked to the Queen most of the time. . . . Shy she was, at first, but not in the least dull—very well informed about current topics and people and historical people, easily amused, and the somewhat severe lines of her face melting into great geniality. The Bishop of course is the most entirely tranquil and collected person on such occasions and put her at her ease. I liked her voice, and her quick direct replies. . . .

"When we rose to go the Bishop marshalled the party. Two of the charming houris were giggling together. He said sternly, 'Come and be *useful*—you were not asked here to amuse yourselves.' Finally I was sent in to the big drawing-room with two girls, 'to make a *noise* of talk at all events.' The room gradually filled with Corporation people and clergy, a civic reunion. They were led up to the Queen one by one, making all sorts of

grotesque contortions. . . . A foolish woman said to me, 'How gracious she is—every inch a queen.' Now that was *exactly* what she was not. She had no majesty of mien, or ease or stateliness. She looked a hard-worked and rather tired woman, plainly dressed, doing her best to be civil to nervous people. It made me feel a sort of affectionate admiration. She was hustled off to speak to some nurses.

"The party drifted off, and then the Bishop carried me off to a little sitting-room, high up, where we talked. . . . He saw me off at the door with cordial and grateful words. We drove off through light mist and retraced our journey, getting in soon after 6.0. A most interesting day: which has reversed all my preconceived ideas about the Queen. I should like to meet her again, and I feel a curious kind of personal regard for her, and a warmth about the heart."

"*March* 9.—Frank and Mrs. Salter arrived with Lord Oxford, very bluff and rosy, with a nice blunt friendly manner. We chattered about Oxford and Cambridge respectively. Then Margot, who did not recognise me, nor realise who I was, till I reminded her of Piz Languard. She is very witch-like, long face, long nose, with a hat with odd black puffs. Dinner in Combination Room, much champagne. . . . Then I was called to change places with Owen, who was next Margot. She had remembered, and we talked about our symptoms, with many nudges and hand-pattings from her. She certainly has a real charm, and I felt her, under all her trappings, to be genuinely affectionate. She had a little olive-wood cigarette-box, the counterpart of the one she gave me.

"We drove to the Guildhall, and after a pause marched on to the platform: a pattern of faces like *shagreen*. . . . Asquith was ill dressed, long neat hair, pleased, I thought, at being an Earl. They went, and the crowd closed in, so I couldn't follow. Margot came up, clasped my hand and said, 'Good-night, old *friend!*' . . .

"What strikes me about it all is the pitiable claim advanced by each speaker that the Liberals were the only serious rational inaugurators of progress and that all else are thieves and robbers. Do they really believe this stuff, especially when the country evidently doesn't want them? It is the low mentality and the coarseness of emotion of a public meeting that sickens me. I feel degraded by being one of such a rabble."

"*March* 16.—Hunting went off at 10.0, and I followed at 11.0. A good many undergraduates going down. A man travelled in my carriage like a very sleek little pig, all his features melted into an adipose paste. To Fishmongers' Hall and found a lecture on Oysters proceeding. . . . Then went with the Clerk to St. Magnus: found a man trying the organ which is splendid, and the church apt for rolling melody. . . . Then we went on to Billingsgate—strange passages to right opening on wharfs, and to a half-demolished house which I took to be Todgers's (Martin Chuzzlewit). The stench of Billingsgate, which was deserted and being swabbed out, was appalling—concentrated centuries of bitter briny fishiness. The market is from 4.30 a.m. to 9.0. We keep an inspector and office here, and I saw the 'condemned' barge, officered by a merry pigeon-fancier, in which the condemned and refuse fish is taken away in iron tanks to be made into poultry food at Wapping. But the smell in the whole place made me feel almost faint, and remained with me all day. We then went and inspected Knill's Wharf, under the Hall: the great granite catacombs very fine, and the dark up-towering bridge, and the swirl of the flood-water round the prows of moored barges. . . .

"Went to Cannon Street, found Noel Blakiston; we travelled in a Pullman and had tea. A quiet evening. I found him as delightful as ever. . . . I only hope he won't knock his head against my critical sympathies. He looked after me on the journey most filially."

"*Lamb House, Rye, March* 21.—Rose early; and Noel departed, taking much sunshine with him. Curzon's death announced—but there is something hollow about his career. His seclusion (never dined out), his pomposity, his awful industry: it gives me a feeling like Gray's Elegy—the boast of heraldry, etc.: something deeply futile about it. Curious that he seems to have had so very few friends of his own order; they were all professional men. He was always friendly to me. . . . All the tributes to him are respectful apologies for not liking him better. . . .

"Hugh Clutton-Brock came. I settled him in the garden-room, advised a stroll, worked till dinner. I find my Memoir *pours* out. This is mamma's birthday."

"*Magdalene, April* 20.—A letter from Madame de —— to say that she and E. had made over another [gift] to me. . . . I can carry out all my schemes without anxiety. It is like a romance: and it fills my mind with affection for the dear donor, who has brought so much sunlight about my path of late and asks so little. Though I have not seen her, I feel about her as I did for mamma and Beth—an unsuspicious love. It is wonderful. . . ."

"*Magdalene, April* 24.—My sixty-third birthday. I awoke after half-sad dreams. I looked out over a hedge and saw mamma in a grey dress making her way resolutely up the road; went to meet her and was greeted by an embrace. Then Maggie came, pale and silent, but smiling; then Beth, who declared herself with a great smile to be perfectly happy. All this moved me much, but I did not think of them as dead, till I awoke, and soon after slept again. It was a curious birthday. I had hardly any letters, except one or two anonymous ones. I wrote fiercely. M. (with an ironical smile), G. (very breezy), and D. (gentle and mild) to lunch, and we had a most pleasant party. Then I went to the Senate House and saw some of our men take degrees—

always an interesting sight. Then the Press Syndicate, dull and lengthy, till 6.30: Sorley in the chair. Then more letters, and a pleasant little party in Hall, to which I sent some Beaufort champagne, and my health was drunk. Both Morshead and Salter sent me books, and a mass of flowers came. Not a bad birthday—about ten hours' work."

"*June* 3.—College photograph. I liked my handsome friendly well-mannered young men very much, and felt proud of them. Lunched with Clutton-Brock and met J. F. Holland: such an easy reasonable talk about many things.

"Then out with Manning. . . . We found a chalk-pit above Harlton (I have been there with Marcus Dimsdale) with a little wood above it, and winding paths and tiny glades—such a little paradise. We wound through it and came out on the wold—the air full of golden sunlight, and a honied breeze, with scents of clover and beans; afar lay Cambridge, very hazy, with smoke going up; down below little quaint house-roofs and orchard-closes, full of buttercup and hemlock. A sweet hour. . . ."

This was his last sight of the country that he knew so well. On the following day, Thursday, June 4, he was in London, returning to Magdalene in the evening. Next morning, feeling ill, he sent for his doctor, who found him to be suffering from pleurisy. His condition caused no alarm for several days, but on June 10 there came a sudden change for the worse. He had got up and was sitting in his study when he was seized by a severe heart-attack, prolonged for several hours. It was judged unsafe to move him from his armchair till the second day, but meanwhile he had been able to see one of his colleagues and to give some directions. On the 12th he was conveyed back to bed; but pneumonia soon developed, and it became known that he was very dangerously ill. He died at midnight on Tuesday, June 16. Three days

later the funeral service was held in the college chapel, and he was followed by many friends to his grave in St. Giles's cemetery.

Magdalene will always remember him as one of the most devoted and generous of her benefactors, and all Cambridge will long miss the presence of so welcome and so rewarding a companion. His friends, far and wide, mourn the loss of a man who loved life, and who with unquenchable spirit enriched it for them all. The last word may be allowed to those who learned to know him when they were boys in his charge at school—who knew him infinitely kind, admirably wise, inspiringly great. On that word, in unforgetting gratitude, we say good-bye to him.

THE END

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